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TEACHING FOR THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Teaching for the Aesthetic Experience: Margaret G. Black

This study answered the question, "How to teach for the Aesthetic Experience in the visual arts?" Six women art educators served as study participants. The researcher identified five components of aesthetic experience: perception, cognition, imagination, emotion, and discovery. Informed by theories of conversational teaching methods, aesthetic development, and adult development, the researcher designed and executed a qualitative case study that incorporated all five components. Art viewing, art making, and evaluative response were the tools used in the study to foster aesthetic understanding. The researcher acted in the role of participant-observer in the study.

Data collection included audio-taped transcripts from all of the study sessions, artwork created during the study, and a final paper in which participants answered the question, "What effect, if any, did conversation have on my aesthetic understanding?" Data analysis revealed that (1) study participants approached viewing and making art as visual and haptic types, (2) comments about emotion and evaluation were more apparent in the role of viewer than in the role of teacher, and (3) personal pedagogical experiences continued to inform classroom practice.

The researcher concludes the document with reflections of how conducting this study expanded her understanding of the aesthetic experience and suggests possible applications of theory to practice by formatting an approach to teach for the aesthetic experience.

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INTRODUCTION

Aesthetic experience makes the invisible visible; it bridges the chasm between student and teacher; it helps us read the world.

--Margaret G. Black

Viewing works of art and creating works of art are catalysts for aesthetic experience. A learning environment designed to teach for aesthetic experience should include both of these disciplines. Since when viewing art the aesthetic experience is a conversation between the viewer and the work, and, when creating art, a conversation between the artist and the medium, conversational teaching methods are the obvious choice when teaching for the aesthetic experience.

With this in mind, I designed and executed a qualitative case study, with the objective to teach for the aesthetic experience, that included art viewing and art making. Six women art educators served as study participants. The goal of this research was threefold: (1) to formalize my notion of what constitutes an aesthetic experience, (2) to encourage a deeper aesthetic understanding and a stronger aesthetic voice in study participants, and (3) based on data collected from the study, to formulate an approach to teach for the aesthetic experience.

In the following pages, I discuss the personal experience that inspired this work, highlight the educators and educational theorists who informed the design of the case study, and provide a detailed account of the case study. Also included are findings from and

analyses of the data I collected before, during, and after the study; recommendations for further research about teaching for the aesthetic experience; and reflections on how conducting this study helped formalize my notion of the aesthetic experience. I conclude this study with recommendations for teaching for the aesthetic experience.

Personal Background

While teaching in the art department at a state funded, coeducational, four year liberal arts college, I began to consider the roles of viewing art, creating art, and conversational teaching methods in the aesthetic experience. Each semester I taught three courses to art and non-art majors-- art history, art studio and art education. Most students in these classes were traditional college age.

I brought to this setting an undergraduate and graduate degree in studio art. As an art student, I learned to pay close attention to the process I engaged in to make art, what that process revealed about me personally, and, in turn, how my artwork reflected and informed my perception of the world. Making art was a way to take a closer look at and reflect on the understanding I gained from personal experiences, primarily encounters with natural environments that provided me with the subject matter I craved as an artist. Not surprisingly, teaching students to pay close attention to their creative processes became the tenet for my studio classes.

While I felt more prepared to teach art studio, I enthusiastically embraced the challenge of teaching art history and art education. For example, to bolster my knowledge of art history, I diligently read the text-- recommended to me for class use by other faculty-- that I had assigned to the class. I soon discovered that while my college art history textbooks had concentrated on art made in Western cultures and highlighted only a select number of artists, the newer art history text contained diverse examples of art made by a variety of artists from as many cultures. The new text explained the perceptual qualities of an artwork, (specifically, stylistic marks made by a certain artist or characteristic of a particular school of art), examined creative processes undertaken by artists, and contained contextual information that helped explain the cultural significance of each work of art.

The combination of perceptual, creative, and historical information enhanced my ability to view art critically, enabling me to discern unique characteristics and to compare one artwork with another. Studying this information provided me with a greater level of knowledge and facilitated a more imaginative response as I was able to imagine and attempt to understand the context in which a piece was created. I also was able to make more personal connections with works of art as I recognized perceptual qualities consistent with different artistic or cultural styles. For me, these discoveries prompted a greater emotional attachment with a work so I could connect the images I studied with personal experiences, and

reflect on my understanding of those experiences. Exposure to this information challenged my more traditional pedagogical ideas while expanding my definition of what constitutes an art object. My broadened knowledge came to bear on my studio work, for I was compelled to experiment with some techniques used by the artists I had studied. In short, I began using the same mediators to describe the experience of viewing art that I had previously assigned to describe the experience of making art: perception, cognition, imagination, emotion, and discovery. Additionally, I paid close attention to the process I engaged in to view art, what that process revealed about me personally, and, in turn, how understanding gained from viewing art reflected and informed my perception of the world.

Excited by the effect that this knowledge had on me as a viewer and creator, I attempted to incorporate art history in my studio class so that students would benefit from learning about the styles and processes of other artists and, in turn, reflect on these ideas in their creative attempts. I considered the opposite as well--including art making in my art history class so that these students would benefit from direct engagement with the creative process. In my art education class, I attempted to explain the benefits of studying works of art and their perceptual, creative, and historical components. While several students enrolled in my art history class were simultaneously studying studio art, and likewise, students enrolled in my studio class were simultaneously studying art history,

it was the idea of merging art viewing and art creating into one learning environment that held my attention.

Despite my best efforts, ignorance of teaching theory and vocabulary insufficient to explain this phenomenon prevented me from positively influencing the creative growth of my students as I had experienced in my own integrated study of studio art and art history. Determined to bridge this divide, I decided to investigate how creating art and viewing art, when informed by knowledge, influence creative growth. I worked to merge these two disciplines in one learning experience.

Doctoral Student Goals

I entered the doctoral program to explore ways to incorporate viewing and creating art in one learning experience. In doing so, I sought to:

- develop a vocabulary to explain the role that art viewing and making informed by knowledge played in my creative growth;
- become familiar with educators and educational researchers who could suggest appropriate teaching methods for combining art viewing and making in one learning experience;
- develop a qualitative case study based on these suggestions,
- find an appropriate study sample to execute the case study;
- devise an effective research methodology and data collection mechanisms that would help me to evaluate how study participants responded to the case study;

- report data findings and analyze the findings;
- provide suggestions for further research based on my findings and analysis;
- use these findings to formalize my original theory;
- suggest teaching strategies for nurturing creative growth.

Dissertation Overview

In the pages that follow, I address each of the preceding goals. Chapter 1 develops a vocabulary to explain how creating art and viewing art while studying information affected my creative growth. The chapter concludes with suggestions for funneling similar experience into one learning environment; the rationale behind the selection of the study sample is also explained. Chapter 2 reviews the educational theories that helped me to design and organize the study. Chapter 3 introduces the study sample and the responsibilities of study participants; it also explains the case study which merges the processes of art viewing and creating, and my methods of data collection. Chapter 4 presents data findings and analysis, after which I suggest potential areas of further research. Chapter 5 summarizes how my findings support and inform my original theory, and concludes with recommendations for teaching for the aesthetic experience.

1. THE COMPONENTS OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

When I first entered the doctoral program, I lacked the vocabulary needed to discuss the impact that viewing and creating art, when informed by knowledge had on creative growth. In studying theories of Western aesthetics and learning what constitutes an aesthetic experience with a work of art, I became conversant in this discussion.

Briefly, I had progressed through what some researchers, including Abigail Housen and Michael Parsons call *stages of aesthetic development*, which resulted in an ability to enjoy more informed aesthetic experiences, when viewing and creating art. Interestingly, many aestheticians described the aesthetic experience with the very terms I used before entering the doctoral program, namely perception, cognition, imagination, emotion and discovery.

This chapter explores the vocabulary that defines aesthetic experience, the components of the aesthetic experience, and how making art is an example of an aesthetic experience. It also outlines a practical application for using these components when teaching for the aesthetic experience. The chapter concludes with a brief introduction to the case study, which is more fully detailed in chapter 3.

1. 1. Developing a Vocabulary

Philosophers John Dewey and Sally Hagaman inform my approach to the definition of aesthetics. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Rick Robinson, and Marcia Muelder Eaton inform my approach to the definition of aesthetic experience. According to Dewey, *aesthetics* refers to "the events and scenes that hold the attentive eye and ear of man, arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens" (4). Hagaman favors a definition of aesthetics wherein "meaning is understood and knowledge constructed in the relationship between an individual or individuals and the issue being studied or questioned" (32). For Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, an aesthetic experience is "an intense involvement of attention in response to a visual stimulus, for no other reason than to sustain the interaction" (178). Eaton defines aesthetic experience as the "experience of intrinsic features of things or events traditionally recognized as worthy of attention and reflection" (143).

Drawing from these theories, and in the context of this study, I have come to define *aesthetics* as the construction of knowledge by a viewer who, when contemplating a work of art, seeks meaning by answering the question "What does it have to say?" The viewer's ability to respond to this question suggests her level of *aesthetic understanding.* *Experience,* in the context of this study, refers to observation of or participation in an event (i.e., an incident or occurrence that holds some degree of importance) that serves as the

basis for constructing new knowledge. Each event is part of the whole experience and, though inseparable from the experience, each event remains distinct. Therefore, *aesthetic experience* comprises a series of distinct yet related events that cause the viewer to contemplate the meaning of a work of art. Developing an awareness of these events enhances our *aesthetic capacity* or our ability to recognize and distinguish one event from another.

We develop our aesthetic capacity by engaging with others in an aesthetic conversation. Jane Martin defines *conversation* as "an interchange of ideas by those who see themselves not as adversaries but as human beings [who] come together to talk and listen and learn from one another" (10). May Sarton believes that "the wonderful thing about real conversation is that it stimulates one to new insights" (83). In examining a work of art, a viewer's mind becomes filled with a litany of questions as the search for meaning begins. As questions are raised and answered and decisions about a work's meaning are made, the conversation becomes focused and more dynamic. When the conversation deepens to the extent that the mediators of aesthetic experience are engaged, greater knowledge about a work of art and about ourselves follows.

The mediators, or *components* inherent to an aesthetic experience are perception, cognition, imagination, emotion, and discovery. (See section 1. 5. for a more detailed discussion of the components of the aesthetic experience when viewing a work of art.)

1. 2. Understanding My Creative Process

In investigating my creative process, I quickly recognized that the components of the aesthetic experience when viewing a work of art are also present when creating a work of art. As I had been trained to do as an art student, I scrutinized what inspires me to create art, what happens during my act of creating, and what my visual product reveals about me.

Viewing and creating works of art are catalysts for aesthetic experience. Each process contributes to creative development by providing the tools with which to experience the visual arts (i.e., the ability to perceive, to make meaning, and to evaluate an art object) and an opportunity to reflect on personal experiences. Therefore, viewing and creating art provide self-knowledge--"ways of Knowing" in the words of Belenky et al.--and broaden our understanding of the world.

Because I have aesthetic skills (i.e., a capacity to critique a work of art in an informed fashion), I am able to participate actively in our culture. As a viewer, I read the language of art, decipher the meaning of works of art, and judge their quality by the level of insight I gain when conversing with them. Creating art allows me to experience the media for myself. While viewing art exposes me to the way another artist expresses something--cold, for example, through the use of cool, muted colors--when creating, I seek to share my experience by expressing thoughts and feelings through the

medium of my choosing. Maxine Greene calls developing one's aesthetic skills "an expression of taste," which she describes as "an expression of preference, of choice." She continues, "To develop taste is to develop the ability to choose freely and reflectively among diverse classes of experience" ("Teaching" 27). Examining my creative process caused me to recognize that viewing and creating works of art are catalysts for aesthetic experience; therefore, both are essential when teaching for the aesthetic experience. (In sections 1. 6. and 1. 7. I elaborate on how making art is an aesthetic experience.)

In coming to understand my process of creative growth, my artistic voice was strengthened. I challenged myself to engage with more diverse art styles and felt more comfortable judging the quality of works of art. I also came to view art objects more critically, always seeking a meaning and a message. I became far less likely to receive and internalize any form of visual stimuli-- for example, advertisements--without first examining them critically at some level. I sought to find a way to share this awareness with my students so that they, too, could develop the skills needed to experience the visual arts fully.

1. 3. Integrating the Components of Aesthetic Experience in the Curriculum

In considering how the components of an aesthetic experience, as outlined above, could be introduced in a visual arts curriculum, I

determined that students must engage in aesthetic conversation and become aware of the tools they need to have a full aesthetic experience. I arrived at this approach by tracing the roots of my deepened aesthetic understanding and by analyzing the activities I engaged in that promoted this understanding. (In section 1. 10. I discuss how to integrate the components of the aesthetic experience into a visual arts curriculum).

1. 4. The Senses and Cognition in Aesthetic Experience

Sensory engagement is often associated with aesthetic experience, yet the question of whether aesthetics is cognitive as well as sensory has engaged philosophers and psychologists for centuries. Although it can be applied to discussions dating from Plato, the term *aesthetics* was not used formally until the eighteenth century when German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762) introduced it in his work *Reflections on Poetry,* first published in 1735. Using the Greek word "aisthetikos," which roughly translates to mean sensory perception, Baumgarten defined aesthetics as the "science of the beautiful" or the "philosophy of taste" (78). He used *aisthetikos* as a counterpoint to *philistine,* which he defined as "one lacking culture," whose interests are in keeping with more commonplace things as opposed to the high-minded spiritual and artistic values held by the aestheticians of his day (14). Baumgarten's theory--that the science of the beautiful could be understood in isolation from pure

reason--was a response to what was then understood as the irrefutable order of Newtonian science and Cartesian logic, one that had compelled most scholars to accept the supremacy of rational thought as the only reliable process of human consciousness. Simply put, Baumgarten wanted to produce a science of beauty based on sense perception, believing this approach would help to explain certain aspects of the human experience that pure reason could not.

Baumgarten believed that the logical mind functioned separately from the sensory body. Still, he theorized that engagement in an aesthetic activity (i.e., the aesthetic experience) was a vehicle toward cognition because much could be learned through sensory perception.

In our own time, philosophers such as Jerome Stolnitz believe that we can assume an "aesthetic attitude" (34), which he defines as "disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of awareness whatever, for its own sake alone" (35). The word *disinterest* is "crucially important" according to Stolnitz, because it "means that we do not look at the object out of concern for any ulterior purpose which it may serve" (35). For this reason, Stolnitz excludes from the aesthetic "many sorts of 'interest'" (35). One example of "nonaesthetic interest" excluded by Stolnitz is "the 'cognitive,' i.e., the interest in gaining knowledge about an object" (35). Stolnitz explains:

> The interest which the sociologist or historian takes in a work of art, . . . is cognitive. Further, where the person who perceives the object, the percipient, has the purpose of passing judgment upon it, his attitude is not aesthetic. (35)

Other philosophers believe that thought and reason are crucial for an aesthetic experience to happen. In *Languages of Art,* Nelson Goodman dismisses the theory of the "aesthetic attitude" arguing that aesthetic experience is one kind of cognitive understanding and that "symbol systems"-- which he defines as "a symbol scheme correlated with a field of reference in art, like words in literature, must be read to be understood" (143). Goodman writes:

> A persistent tradition pictures the aesthetic attitude as passive contemplation of the immediately given, direct apprehension of what is presented, uncontaminated by any contemplation, isolated from all echoes of the past and all threats and promises of the future, exempt from all enterprise. . . . I need hardly recount the philosophic faults and aesthetic absurdities of such a view until someone seriously goes so far as to maintain that the appropriate aesthetic attitude toward a poem amounts to gazing at the printed page without reading it.
>
> I have held, on the contrary, that we have to read the painting as well as the poem, and that aesthetic experience is dynamic rather than static. It involves making delicate discriminations and discerning subtle relationships, identifying symbol systems and characters within these systems and what these characters denote and exemplify, interpreting works and recognizing the world in terms of works and works in terms of the world. (241)

If we do not understand the symbol systems that we perceive, according to Goodman, we cannot possibly have an aesthetic experience with the object. In support of Goodman's theory, developmental psychologists Jessica Davis and Howard Gardner maintain that "a cognitive approach extends the province of graphic symbolization from representation on paper to representation of understanding" (119). For this reason, according to Davis and Gardner, formal training in art, even for young children, must include instruction on how to read and interpret the symbol systems

inherent in works of art, whether in their own creations or in the works of art they study.

I believe that the aesthetic experience is both cognitive and sensory for two reasons:

1. When we view a work of art, we know that what we are viewing is a human creation, and that raw materials of some kind have been manipulated to create a work of art. This basic level of knowledge is a form of cognition.

2. While a perceptual response to visual stimuli might be purely sensory (e. g., a painting of a storm at sea such as Gericault's The Raft of the Medusa might entice me to feel cold), any attempt to interpret, reflect on, or otherwise understand such a perceptual response is an act of cognition.

Like Goodman, I believe that our ability to recognize and interpret the formal qualities used in visual art is important to our aesthetic experience, because in doing so we "read" the language of art. It is my contention that this ability to read the visual arts can be stimulated for when teaching for the aesthetic experience, an approach to teaching that recognizes and emphasizes the components of perception, cognition, imagination, emotion, and discovery.

1. 5. The Aesthetic Components When Viewing Art

1. 5. 1. Perception

Perception refers to the experience of engaging with the formal qualities of an art object and the effect that these qualities have on

our senses (e.g., how *seeing* a painting of a storm at sea such as Gericualt's The Raft of the Medusa can make us *feel* cold, or how *seeing* a bright color-field painting such as Bridget Riley's Drift 2 can make us *feel* energized). While sight is perhaps the most obvious sense through which visual stimulus is recorded, perception also refers to our implicit desire, whether exercised or not, to supplement our visual response with the sense of smell, taste, touch, or hearing. In the act of perceiving a work of art, a deeper understanding is gained as the organizational elements that constitute the work--namely, its composition, lines or marks made by the artist, color, and surface characteristics--are recognized. Greene describes this type of revelation as "aesthetic inquiry." She believes that the point of engaging in such an inquiry:

> Is to intensify self-consciousness with regard to experiences with . . . visual art. Also, it is to clarify the concepts used in thinking and talking about the art forms with which we are particularly concerned, and to help us make more meaningful interpretations of aesthetic facts ("Teaching" 27).

Gerard Knieter defines perception as it pertains to the aesthetic experience as "the process through which data from the senses are utilized. A percept is that which is known of an object, a quality, or a relationship as a result of sensory experience" (4). Stolnitz believes that perception is at the core of the "aesthetic attitude" (33). For Stolnitz, perception in the aesthetic attitude "'isolates' the object and focuses upon it--the 'look' of the rocks, the sound of the ocean, the colors of the painting. Hence the object is not seen in a fragmentary

or passing manner, as it is in 'practical' perception, e.g., in using a pen" (35).

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson found that even for museum professionals who are constantly surrounded by visual objects, the "perceptual dimension" is an important component of their aesthetic experience. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson define the *perceptual dimension* as "general remarks reflecting experiential engagement with works of art," and "sensing the overall physicality of the work" (29). They contend that in their study, "all the museum professionals interviewed indicated that in those encounters that proved to be personally salient they felt they were visually engaged by and drawn to the features of the objects immediately before them" (29).

Perceptual involvement with a work of art is an important component of the aesthetic experience because recognizing formal elements and reflecting on their sensory qualities provide us with clues to the work's meaning. Feeling, through the engagement of the senses, and reasoning, through thoughtful consideration of the organizational elements are integral to the construction of knowledge between ourselves and the object studied.[1]

---

[1]The question of whether "reason" and "thoughtful consideration" are cognitive as well as perceptual has been the focus of much philosophical debate. For a classic review of this debate, see C. W. K. Mundle, *Perception: Facts and Theories.*

1. 5. 2. Cognition

On the most basic level, *cognition,* as a component of the aesthetic experience, refers to our capacity to understand that a work of art under our contemplation is human-made and can be distinguished from found or natural objects. That we may contemplate a work's subject in an effort to uncover an artist's intentions furthers our cognitive approach.

Goodman believes that the symbols used by artists to express meaning are cognitive; that is, an artist plans the symbols and presents them to the viewer for interpretation. In this regard, an artist must think about the meaning of the symbols selected and a viewer must be able to "read" the symbols in order to understand the meaning of the work. Goodman writes:

> Use of symbols beyond immediate need is for the sake of understanding, not practice; what compels is the urge to know, what delights is discovery, and communication is secondary to the apprehension and formulation of what is to be communicated. The primary purpose [of using symbols] is cognition in and for itself; the practicality, pleasure, compulsion, and communicative utility all depend upon this. (258)

The belief that cognition plays a crucial role in the aesthetic experience is particularly contentious because Baumgarten sought to understand the aesthetic experience as separate from pure reason. Nonetheless, describing the thought processes involved in both the creation and interpretation of works of art has been the focus of much psychological research. For example, Davis and Gardner contend that "the field of aesthetics informed cognitive psychology's understanding of art as a cognitive process by affirming that the

artist is equipped not only with an 'eye' but also a 'mental set,' and by enumerating the components of that mental set as elements of line, composition, and expression" (106).

Cognition also refers to our level of knowledge about the content (i.e., technique, subject matter, etc.) and context (i.e., era the work was created, stated purpose of the object, commissioner of the object) of a work of art. Unlike a perceptual response that may be purely sensory, knowledge for the most part is learned; that is, we must have some level of training to achieve a sophisticated cognitive response. As one interviewee in Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's study professed, "You only see what you are taught to see. You have to be taught to see a certain amount before you can go from that and develop a more sustained and creative process of seeing" (42). For Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, a sophisticated level of cognitive understanding, as it constitutes an approach to a work of art, "aims at the discovery not only of an artist's unexpressed meanings but of the work's own history, its place in the culture that produced it, and its function" (43).

The cognitive component of the aesthetic experience is important because "reading" the "symbol systems," as Goodman attests, provides the viewer with the language needed to articulate the subjective effect of a work of art. Contemplating content and context constructs knowledge of a work; that is, this line of inquiry recalls the era and culture of the work's creation, thereby allowing the viewer to ponder the role the work played in the culture at large

and how it represented the values of a long-ago society. By constructing knowledge, cognition helps to release the imagination, an important component in the aesthetic experience.

1. 5. 3. Imagination

While *perception* refers to the experience of viewing an art object and *cognition* to human reasoning or learned knowledge, *imagination* relies on (1) our capacity to recall past experiences and to associate them with current stimuli; and (2) our ability to think beyond the work of art we are contemplating and to venture into new, uncharted territory. Anne Sheppard recognizes imagination in the aesthetic experience when we "are stimulated to go beyond what is seen or heard, to reach out toward an understanding that cannot be readily expressed in words" (37). Greene believes that the imagination has a way of "freeing [us] to look at things as if they could be otherwise" ("Art and Imagination" 379). Judy Burton believes that the imagination "is a free activity of the human mind, one that carries us beyond the intellectual bondage of everyday life" (47). *Imagination,* then, as it refers to the aesthetic experience, is the release of *thoughts,* that are triggered by viewing a work of art. By *thoughts,* I mean the recollection of past experiences prompted by engaging with work of art (e.g., "This painting reminds me of what my grandmother's farm looked like"), or by considering what we are viewing as being larger or smaller than life, or by contemplating

qualities that the artwork recalls but that are not readily apparent in the work itself.

While the imagination allows an artist to make communal a particular experience, a work of art, in turn, stimulates the imagination of an audience. Imaginative thoughts may include reflecting on an artist's purported intention before creating a work of art, an artist's assumed thought processes while creating a work, and related information about the era in which a work was created. Trying to imagine an artist's creative process, while striving to understand the content and context of an object, brings us into closer communication with the artist and the historical period in which he or she worked, because our imagination allows us to hypothesize about content and context as we ponder.

Our imagination allows us to pretend, for example, that we are one with a work of art, that we are one of its characters or subjects. We can also imagine how any change in the scale, palette, or subject matter of a work might affect our response. No matter how we approach a work, imagination allows us to engage in a conversation that is both personal and worldly. Imagination can help us understand what lies within and beyond ourselves.

The role of the imagination in the aesthetic experience is important because it allows us to communicate with the artist and to participate in a work's context through recall and recollection of our own experiences. The ability of an artwork to trigger the imagination provides us with an intimate experience with the work,

and allows us to go beyond the stimuli at hand, inventing new realms for our creative thoughts. This level of imagining brings us to new possibilities, new ways of seeing, feeling, and thinking. These imagined responses and their closeness to us often stimulate an emotional reaction to an object. That is, we begin to reflect on the affective qualities of the work of art.

1. 5. 4. Emotion

Emotion refers to the *feeling affect* a work of art has on us. By *feeling affect* I mean not only the emotional state of mind of the artist, but how the artist's feelings, as expressed in the work of art, affect the viewer's emotional state of mind. These feeling affects, whether presented by the artist or received by the viewer, might include a positive emotional reaction, such as delight, inspiration, or love, or a negative emotional reaction, such as dislike or frustration.

The way in which a work of art affects a viewer's emotional state should not be confused with, in the words of Dewey, "automatic reflexes." He explains the difference thus:

> Emotion belongs of a certainty to the self. But it belongs to the self that is concerned in the movement of events toward an issue that is desired or disliked. We jump instantaneously when we are scared, as we blush on the instant when we are ashamed. But fright and shamed modesty are not in this case emotional states. Of themselves they are but automatic reflexes. In order to become emotional they must become parts of an inclusive and enduring situation that involves concern for objects and their issues. (42)

An emotional response, as a distinct yet related event in the aesthetic experience, is a form of cognition. Suzanne Langer believes that art--unlike discursive language, which is governed by the laws

of syntax--has the ability to engage us in an emotional response. According to Langer, "Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling" (345). That is, the absence of syntactical rules allows the artist added freedom of expression, which can translate to more immediate emotional engagement for artist and viewer.

An emotional response allows us to carry on an essential dialogue with a work of art, as we personalize the stimulus before us. Like an imaginative response, an emotional response might be nostalgic--for example, when a work of art reminds us of past associations or experiences. An emotional response also refers to the way we interpret and understand a work of art--for example, if we feel passionate about or repulsed by an art object.

The idea that artists express emotions through their art is known in aesthetic circles as the *expressive theory.* Greene believes that:

> a great deal is illuminated by expressivist theories: our attention is drawn to the emotive components of the aesthetic experience, to the organization of sensuous qualities within particular works, to forms that may symbolize or embody or evoke significant human feelings ("Teaching" 34).

Eaton reminds us that "emotions," either as pertaining to the feelings of the artist when she created the work or to the feelings of the audience when viewing the work, are really "infer[red]" (25). That is, we cannot know if the artist felt a certain way simply because the painting evokes in us a certain feeling. For example, some viewers consider Picasso's Guernica to be a statement of his anger about the bombing of Guernica. However, we cannot prove that this was Picasso's intent simply by looking at the painting. And certainly we

cannot prove that he was angry *while* painting Guernica. Likewise, we might feel anger about the horrors of war when viewing Guernica, but we cannot say for certain that the painting triggered this mindset, particularly if our feelings about war were not clearly defined before viewing the painting, or if our anger results from preconceived notions about war.

A question that has riddled philosophers and psychologists for centuries is this: Why would a person deliberately spend time and otherwise engage with a work of art that might elicit a negative emotional response, for example the stark portrayal of death in Casper David Friedrich's Abbey in an Oak Forest? Eaton responds this way:

> In those cases where negative emotions are really present, the responder must be in sufficient control of the situation. . . . Positive aesthetic experiences that include an element of real fear must be such that the experiencers believe that the overall situation is under control. . . . If the fear or sadness is so intense that the viewer is no longer able to concentrate on the colors, sounds, or artistic technique for example, then the experience ceases to be aesthetic. (41)

In other words, if there is an acknowledged distance between the reality of the viewer and the perceived reality of the work of art, the viewer can enjoy an emotional response without being overcome with "real" emotion. In this way, art is cathartic: It purges emotions from the viewer in a controlled fashion, thus creating an inner state of emotional harmony.

By reflecting on the affective qualities of a work, then, we connect more closely with our feelings and our inner selves. As a result, we discover something about ourselves, the work of art, and

the artist who made it. Thus, discovery is also an important component of the aesthetic experience.

1. 5. 5. Discovery

Discovery happens during the aesthetic experience in two ways: formally and personally. *Formal discovery* relates to glimpsing elements not yet seen within an artwork, much like what happens when putting a puzzle together: We study the qualities of each piece or section to understand how it relates to the whole. Thus, we find visual clues when we give ourselves time with an artwork and when we bring a measure of concentration to the viewing process. *Personal discovery* refers to discovering something about ourselves, or about the world at large, as a direct or indirect result of the viewing experience.

Engaging in formal discovery prompts us to ask questions of the artist while reacting to a work of art (e.g., Why did the artist use that color? make that mark?). In doing so, we make connections between ourselves and the artist who created the work. Monroe Beardsley believes that:

> one of the central components in art experience must be the experience of discovery, of insights into connections and organizations--the elation that comes from the apparent opening up of intelligibility. I call this 'active discovery' to draw attention to the excitement of meeting a cognitive challenge (292).

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson believe that discovery is important to the aesthetic experience because through discovery we acknowledge:

> the distinctive quality of human connectedness that constitutes the unique set of challenges present in the aesthetic encounter, and at the same time, gives form to the skills the viewer brings to the work. The interaction between those qualities that are apprehensible in the work in the first moment of the encounter and those that still provoke viewers to revise or expand their skills accounts for the continued investment of attention in a temporally stable object. (136)

What else could account for our "continued investment of attention" in a work of art? Perhaps it is our desire to discover more about ourselves. When we acknowledge and allow ourselves to enter a world created by an artist, we can discover something in ourselves that relates to the vast spectrum of human emotions--something we might never have discovered were it not for such an experience. Discovering what engages our attention in an object is what Hilary Davis calls "aesthetic pleasure," which she considers "self-empowering: it is the joy of self-discovery, the thrill of seeing oneself reflected [in a work of art]" (102).

Discovering how formal elements are used by an artist to create a composition and reflecting on our level of engagement with a work provide an impetus for contemplating the visual stimulus in the context of the corporeal world. As our capacity to exercise the components of perception, cognition, imagination, emotion, and discovery is vital for a rich and informed aesthetic experience when viewing art, so too is our ability to exercise these same components in art production. Making art is a catalyst for aesthetic experience and is a critical element of an aesthetic education.

1. 6. Art Making as an Aesthetic Experience

Victor Lowenfeld and Lambert Brittain describe the process of art creation as a "complex one in which [artists] bring together the diverse elements of their experience to make a new and meaningful whole" (54). Artist Marcel Duchamp believes that:

> In the creative act, the artist goes from intention to realization through a chain of totally subjective reactions. His struggle toward the realization is a series of efforts, pains, satisfactions, refusals, decisions, which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious, at least on the esthetic plane" (28).

For the purposes of this study, I define *creating art* as the conscious act of forming, producing, or otherwise bringing into existence an artwork that has not previously existed in the corporeal world, with the intent that the work will express an idea original to the artist.

Creating art provides countless opportunities for exercising the skills of perception, cognition, imagination, emotion, and discovery. Making art is a means to take the "external stimulus"[2] of an original experience and transform it into a visual problem to be solved. This experience might be an encounter with a work of art or a natural environment, or it might be an otherwise salient experience that the artist feels compelled to relive. In any case, re-creating the experience using visual media allows us to come to know and understand the experience more fully. *Talking* about an experience through the creative process, then, helps us come to know more

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[2] The Oxford Universal Dictionary defines external as "Situated outside; pertaining to, connected with, or lying towards, the outside" (661), and stimulus as "An agency or influence that stimulates to action or (counts. *to*) that quickens an activity or process" (2021). External stimulus, as used here, can be defined as "ideas generated or influenced from outside forces."

about the experience and ultimately lets us come to know more about ourselves.

If, as a viewer, an aesthetic conversation begins with the impulse to take a closer look at a finished artwork, then as a creator the aesthetic conversation begins with the impulse to take a closer look at an experience that we want to re-create visually. This entry into creative aesthetic conversation is fraught with questions and challenges concerning how best to express our level of understanding of the original experience.

Reliving the original (aesthetic) experience and in essence having another while engaged in the creative process is what Csikszentmihalyi calls *flow*. He defines *flow* as a time "when a person's skills are in exquisite balance with the challenges presented" (22). He believes that flow "hooks artists on their medium in the first place, and that it also drives them to push beyond the limits to innovate and experiment" (22). Flow can happen at any level of aesthetic development because the person will balance his or her skill level with the challenges presented. That is, the level of the flow response suggests one's level of aesthetic understanding. In the next section, I elaborate on how making art is an aesthetic experience.

1. 7. The Aesthetic Components When Making Art

1. 7. 1. Perception

From the earliest stage of the creative process, an artist considers the colors, texture, size, and shape of the final product. As the work unfolds, the artist works through a seemingly endless array of possibilities and alternatives. In this regard, the artist exercises the skills of perception in much the same way they are used to view a work of art--that is, by contemplating how raw materials can be (or have been) manipulated to ignite a sensory response in potential viewers.

When making a work of art, I work through countless alternatives as I progress toward the conclusion of the piece. I constantly look as I work. I look for unity in the composition I am constructing, via the colors, shapes, and forms that I am using. I take in the whole, along with its parts, in a continual attempt to unify the piece. This attention to composition allows me to acquire immediate knowledge about what I am working on, and it also keeps me on the verge of learning something more, as I consider my perceptual possibilities. Once I feel comfortable with a solution, new problems or challenges may arise, presenting further opportunity for exploration--the next area of inquiry. These challenges are constant, dynamic, always urging me forward.

When viewing an artwork, we mainly perceive through the sense of sight; however, when creating, we engage the senses of sight, smell, and touch. For example, I use paper pulp as my painting

medium. Paper pulp is an especially physical medium because of its weight and texture. It is shapeless and colorless when first beaten, and because it remains immersed in water until needed, it is cold and sticky to the touch. Raw pulp is pungent. If it sits in stagnant water too long, it smells of sulfur odor; texture and appearance are essential parts of papermaking.

Exercising perceptual skills in the creative process according to Greene, "enables those who open themselves to what they create to see more, to feel more, to attend to more facets of the experienced world" ("Art Worlds in Schools" 215-216). Exercising perceptual skills requires that artists constantly look and evaluate. They look to unify the composition into a whole so that all of the parts will "fit" and work together harmoniously. How does an artist judge whether a piece is working harmoniously or not? An artist can make informed judgments by being exposed to the work of other artists. That is, as Dewey argues, "the creator needs a rich and developed background which . . . cannot be achieved except by consistent nurture of interest" (p. 266). By "nurture of interest," Dewey is referring to the role of *cognition* in the creative process.

1. 7. 2. Cognition

Cognition, as defined in section 1. 5. 2., refers to our capacity to understand that the object of our contemplation is human-made and can be distinguished from found or natural objects. The fact that we

may contemplate a work's subject in an effort to uncover the artist's intentions furthers our cognitive approach.

In my own creative process, I consider a piece to work harmoniously or be in need of more attention by determining how closely it resembles what I had initially envisioned. Evaluating my work's level of success involves considering its capacity to help me recapture the original experience (i.e., the basis for the work) and how other artists might have treated the same subject. Throughout the creative process, I consider a galaxy of other artists' processes and techniques as I try to determine the way I want to express an idea. I ask myself questions like, "How would other landscape artists express the idea of cold? paint clouds? or compose objects to create visual harmony?"

The combination of reliving the original experience, which is intensely personal, and contemplating the processes of other artists helps me to connect emotion and cognition in the creative process. While an emotional response provides the impetus for initiating a creative process, cognition is a way to theoretically "consult" with other artists about how they would resolve creative problems. Maurice Brown believes that "Art that lasts does so in part by *including* (original emphasis [art historical influences]) along the broadest base as well as the newest extensions of the culture" (67). Though my knowledge of traditional techniques informs my creative efforts, I am always eager to explore, to try untested techniques, and to create a new vision. Like Brown, I believe that making judgments

in the creative process requires that we trust our decisions, while sacrificing others along the way. As Brown states so well, judgment in the creative process requires "using some but not all of the effects, sequences, occurrences, and insights that will never again present themselves in quite the same way. . . . [of which one of] the inevitable consequence is loss" (62). While examining and contemplating the visual processes and products of other artists enables us to know, by comparison, how inventive and otherwise groundbreaking our latest efforts are, it is the imagination that enables an artist to visualize what a composition will eventually look like.

1. 7. 3. Imagination

Imagination, as defined in section 1. 5. 3., relies on (1) our capacity to recall past experiences and to associate them with current stimuli; and (2) our ability to think beyond the object of our contemplation and venture into new, uncharted territory. In the context of art production, Dewey believed that "an imaginative experience is what happens when varied materials of sense quality, emotion, and meaning come together in a union that makes a new birth in the world" (267). Similarly, Burton believes that engaging in the creative process allows for the "meeting of two different and distinct phenomena--thoughts in the head and concrete materials--that provokes the imagination to stretch in new ways to make connections among thoughts, ideas and responses previously

unconnected and unsuspected" (46). In my own creative process, ideas about how to proceed come from the work as it unfolds. I imagine how I want the work to look when it is finished and take steps toward that goal. At the same time, the work directs me as I strive for unity, working in concert with the medium.

As attention to composition continues, the work becomes dislodged from the imagination, taking its place in the physical world. This need to express an experience, to re-create, to re-enact, to innovate and experiment is rooted in *emotion*.

1. 7. 4. Emotion

Emotion, as defined in section 1. 5. 4., refers to the "feeling affect" a work of art has on us. The feeling affect not only considers the state of mind of the artist, but also how the artist's feelings, as expressed in the work of art, affect the state of mind of the viewer.

In my work as a landscape painter, emotion helps me to recapture the excitement I feel when viewing an original natural setting. The aesthetic experiences I have with natural settings--particularly with space, vastness, and quality of natural light--inspire me to visually explore the subject from my perspective. When I create, I am not interested in imitating or duplicating what it was that provided me with the initial aesthetic experience; rather, I seek to re-examine the experience through my own voice. Through these visual explorations, I become the creator of the painting and the author of its meaning. Hence, like Dewey, I believe that

"expression is emotional and guided by purpose" (50). Being stimulated by challenges such as how to proceed and by exploring new areas of inquiry, is how an artist makes *discoveries* in the creative process.

1. 7. 5. Discovery

Discovery, as defined in section 1. 5. 5., happens formally or personally. *Formal discovery* relates to glimpsing elements not yet seen within the object, and *personal discovery* refers to discovering something about oneself or about the world at large as a direct or indirect result of the viewing experience.

As when viewing a work of art, I believe that when creating a work of art formal discovery is necessarily connected to personal discovery. At the onset of my creative process, I must determine the colors, textures, shapes, and thickness of the painting. Once these elements are defined, I begin a series of experiments that are necessary for the eventual success of the piece. I experiment constantly apart from the actual painting. I make my palette knowing that the colors must work in harmony with each other. My creative refrain is "How will this color, shape, or texture work with the whole to form a visual unity?" Maurice Brown believes that:

> cooperation with a medium sooner or later brings out the choices, qualities, and unsuspected capacities that . . . become in time the skill and authority that permits such regressive wandering. For the artist who understands the difference between the authority and the wandering, who sees the latter as enabled by the former, not as its absolute replacement, such experience is informative. (p. 87)

Experimenting reveals the possibilities inherent in paper pulp. In turn, these experiments provide me with more knowledge and ideas for how to proceed with the medium. Determining compositional characteristics in the creative process is an example of formal discovery. The ultimate choices I make tell me something about my creative preferences, an example of personal discovery. Dewey eloquently describes the role of personal discovery in the creative process when he writes "Painter[s] know the delight of discovery. . . . they learn from their work, as they proceed, to see and feel what had not been part of the original plan and purpose" (139).

On completion of a piece, an artist considers its level of success--or degree of harmony--by evaluating how closely it resembles what he or she had envisioned initially. If the piece seems to be working, the artist might feel a sense of elation or satisfaction; if not, the artist might feel extremely frustrated--both further examples of emotion in the creative process. It is important to note that success or failure in the creative process is not necessarily associated with good or bad. A successful creation may fit the artist's definition of visual harmony, but a failure or a work that does not fit this definition can be a catalyst that expands the artist's aesthetic boundaries, leading to new ideas or approaches, more wandering, and novel opportunities for success.

Aesthetic experience, whether encountered as a viewer or creator, is a cognitive as well as sensory experience. It is a reflective, self-conscious activity aimed fundamentally at enriching our human

existence. While viewing art challenges us to contemplate the perceptual, cognitive, imaginative, emotional, and discovery components as presented by other artists, creating art invites us to participate in an aesthetic conversation and ultimately to engage in an aesthetic experience as practitioners of the creative process.

1. 8. The Study

Having established that the aesthetic components are essential to a rewarding aesthetic experience, I designed a qualitative case study that would facilitate aesthetic experiences with selected works of art. Additionally, I sought to encourage participants to develop a deeper aesthetic understanding and a stronger aesthetic voice. I chose a qualitative case study, which Michael Quinn Patton defines as methodology that "seeks to describe in depth and detail, in context, and holistically," because as a teacher I was interested in witnessing and evaluating how my theory of aesthetic experience would manifest itself (54). Like Patton, I believe that a qualitative case study is:

> Particularly useful where one needs to understand some special people, particular problem or unique situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information--rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few examples of the phenomenon studied (54).

Teaching for the aesthetic experience as the basis of this qualitative case study allowed me to examine closely how each component of the aesthetic experience was received by study participants.

My roles in the study were facilitator and participant-observer. As facilitator, I opened sessions by asking questions that urged aesthetic conversation. As participant-observer--which John and Lyn Lofland define as methodology that "always involves the interweaving of looking and listening . . . of watching and asking . . . [and] may involve repeated and prolonged contact between researchers and informants" (13)--I was able to observe, ask questions, listen to, and otherwise engage with the participants as they traveled into a domain of deeper aesthetic understanding.

The role of participant-observer allowed me to observe, in the words of William Perry, any "transitions" that participants might pass through during the course of the study (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 78). Perry defines *transitions* as "the variety and ingenuity of the ways students found to move from a familiar pattern of meanings . . . . to a new vision that promised to make sense of their broadening experience" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 78). In the context of my study, *transitions* refer to the process of gaining a more informed understanding of aesthetic experience as a result of participating in the study.

I chose women art educators, rather than students enrolled in a credited course that I would be teaching, for two reasons: First, while women constitute the majority of art educators, historically they have been excluded from participation in the aesthetic dialogue. As a result, a paucity of data exists concerning how women art educators understand the aesthetic experience and how or if they

attempt to incorporate aesthetic awareness in their curricula. While aware that I could not make a broad assessment by working with such a small sample of participants, I hoped the study would provide me with sufficient data to suggest future research studies about women art educators and the aesthetic experience. Because the college-level art education courses I teach are overwhelmingly populated by women, collecting data about what women could learn by participating in this research seemed prudent. Second, I believed that practicing women art educators would respond frankly to the study, providing constructive feedback about my approach to teaching for aesthetic experience, whereas students enrolled in a credited course might bias feedback in seeking a good grade.

The case study is based on the two major principles of Perry's theory of cognitive and ethical growth, which is addressed in chapter 2. Chapter 3 explains how I constructed the case study based on the Perry scheme.

1. 9. Areas of Concern

A limitation to this study design with regard to the chosen study sample became immediately apparent. The Perry scheme (see chapters 2 and 3) begins with persons who have a clear image of and a strong trust in authorities on whom they rely to provide absolute truth and unquestionable knowledge. Women art educators, I presumed, would more than likely be beyond this position because they act as authorities in their creative processes and in their

classrooms. Despite this, Perry's belief that at any position we have an idea of what constitutes authority, and that at some point, if we pass through enough positions, we will start to see ourselves as an authority seemed to minimize this issue. No matter what position or area of transition the women were in at any given point during the study, they would be able to relate to the idea of authority as presented in the curriculum from their own level of understanding.

To be sure, I had no way of predicting the cognitive and ethical positions of study participants according to the Perry scheme, nor could I control their level of aesthetic understanding as described by Parsons or Housen in the next chapter. I was therefore faced with the task of designing content that might prove beneath or beyond the comprehension level of any particular participant. To minimize unease, I designed the art-making activities so that each woman could speak with the voice of her own authority. As well, I encouraged participants to serve as authority by having them review their personal data and evaluate in their own words, how participation in the study affected their level of aesthetic understanding.

Because I had found no research connecting Perry's scheme to aesthetic development and because I had not pilot-tested my approach, I could not say with any level of confidence that this study would prove effective. Still, the study was inspired by my own aesthetic growth and was based on my recollection of how that growth occurred. The images that participants created and studied

were like those that propelled me to a deeper aesthetic understanding and a stronger aesthetic voice--the same results I sought for the participants.

1. 10. Practical Application of Aesthetic Components: Study Objectives

Believing that all five components would be necessary to achieve a fuller aesthetic experience, I included each in the case study.

1. 10. 1. The Perceptual Component

The perceptual component helped to elicit conversation about the experience of engaging with the formal qualities of an artwork. Teaching for perceptual engagement fosters aesthetic experience because by examining organizational elements we are able to notice and name compositional qualities that otherwise may not have occurred to us. Experiencing the perceptual component when teaching for the aesthetic experience allows us, in the words of David Perkins, to "look for specific 'technical' dimensions. [We can ask ourselves] to notice colors, and how they relate; the major shapes and how they balance or unbalance one another; the use of line, jagged, smooth, or quick, careful" (*The Intelligent Eye* 53). We enter into the perceptual component by examining and theoretically re-creating an object in an effort to understand the artist's creative process.

1. 10. 2. The Cognitive Component

The cognitive component, in the form of reading materials, provided participants with pertinent information about each artwork we studied. When possible, I included information--similar to what I had studied both before and since entering the doctoral program--that helped improve my aesthetic understanding. Reading materials highlighted perceptual qualities, explained creative processes, provided content and contextual information, addressed philosophical discussions of what constitutes an aesthetic object and an aesthetic experience with an aesthetic object, and included examples of art criticism to encourage informed evaluation (see section 1. 11. 3.).

When possible, we studied the person or persons who commissioned the artwork, which provided insights about the work's subject. In addition, we studied the subject of the work, any symbolism, and the significance of the subject's placement in the composition. When possible, we discussed the private collection or museum collection in which an artwork had previously been housed, in an effort to provide general historical information, and insight into the political issues that sometimes surround museum collecting. Cognitive information assists in the aesthetic experience because it allows for multiple points of access to a work, which in turn promote greater understanding.

1. 10. 3. The Imaginative Component

The imaginative component provided study participants with an opportunity to use the visual objects they viewed and created as a catalyst for recalling past experiences and for associating those experiences with current stimuli. The imagination deepens aesthetic understanding, because when we allow ourselves to look beyond the surface and free ourselves to look at the world creatively, we engage in a thought process similar to that of the artist.

By encouraging study participants to first examine cognitive information, I believed an imaginative conversation would soon follow. That is, in discovering the content and context of a work, study participants would, in effect, bring the artist's thought process to life by contemplating the social and political situation of the day and, as necessary, examining the commission requirements of the object's patron.

The imaginative component could also encourage study participants to creatively explore the object of study. For example, how would the object look at a different scale, with a different palette, or with a different subject matter? Imaginatively deconstructing a finished work in this manner can inform decisions during our own creative processes.

1. 10. 4. The Emotional Component

The emotional component provided study participants with an opportunity to connect personally with an art object. Encouraging an

emotional conversation with works of art encouraged participants to tune into their feelings or in Greene's words, their "inner time" ("Teaching" 21). The emotional component is, I believe, congruent with what Belenky et al. call "connected teaching," in that the facilitator must welcome and acknowledge the participants personal experiences which are the basis for emotional engagements with works of art (194).

The emotional component allowed us to reflect on the implied or suggested emotional mindset of an artist as he or she created a work, and on our emotional response when viewing the work. Articulating or trying to articulate the emotional state of an artist, the emotional impact of a work, and the emotional response of a viewer is essential when teaching for the aesthetic experience, as it conveys the sometimes harsh but always human qualities of a work of art.

1. 10. 5. The Discovery Component

The discovery component provided participants with an opportunity to uncover the meaning of an artwork by focusing their attention on specific details and how these details contribute to compositional harmony. Focusing on a single artwork during each week's session allowed for prolonged viewing, thus encouraging exploration and discovery of the technical devices used. David Perkins contends, through prolonged exposure "you will not only see new features but

resee features you found before with more familiarity and fluency" (*The Intelligent Eye* 42).

Even though we focused on one artwork per session, each artwork was housed in a gallery with similar images; I hoped comparisons would be made. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson contend that the museum setting is the perfect environment for discovery to happen because "looking at one object in context with others can be a great learning experience as juxtapositions and relationships to other works of that period, culture, other artists or art made during different times in the same artist's career often happen" (146).

Discovery, both formal and personal, fosters aesthetic understanding because as we unravel the technical devices of an art object, we learn and are therefore better able to communicate with the object and to relate to the intentions of its creator. Such discovery fosters aesthetic conversation, the object becoming a catalyst for theoretical conversation between the viewer and the creator.

1. 11. Aesthetic Tools: Viewing, Creating, and Evaluation

Viewing and creating works of art provided me with the tools with which to experience the visual arts more fully. In turn, these tools enabled me to develop the aesthetic skills I needed to participate actively in our culture, as I learned to view all visual objects more critically. Therefore, viewing and creating art, and evaluating the

level of understanding gained from each experience was essential to include in the case study.

1. 11. 1. Art Viewing

Art viewing provided study participants with the opportunity to decipher the meaning a work of art held for them. Engaging in conversation with other participants enabled each woman to examine, reflect upon, and at times expand upon or reiterate her original response. As questions were raised and decisions made about each artwork, the historical, cultural, and sociological meaning associated with the work was examined and evaluated as well. Art viewing fosters aesthetic experience because immersing ourselves in the meaning a work of art holds for us, and reflecting and expanding on that meaning by considering the experience of others provides us with greater knowledge of a work of art and about ourselves.

1. 11. 2. Art Making

Art making provided study participants with an opportunity to explore visual media for themselves, thus providing them with direct access to the aesthetic conversation. While viewing art challenges us to contemplate the perceptual, cognitive, imaginative, emotional, and discovery stimuli presented by other artists, art making requires that we engage the imagination and discover problems and solutions for ourselves. Like Judy Burton, I believe that when we practice our

own art making, we learn to make aesthetic judgments not only about our creations but also about the work of other artists, for it is in the creative process that "the senses and imagination interplay and become the scene for complex reflective judgments" (52).

Art making fosters aesthetic experience because engaging with visual media provides an opportunity for us to "speak" the same language as the artists we study. Art making requires critical thinking skills that can inform aesthetic judgments made about works by other artists. When we create and critique our own art, we learn to look critically at the art of others. In this way, we are able use our own work as a point of reference when responding to the work of other artists.

1. 11. 3. Evaluation

When we evaluate a work, we attempt to make an informed judgment. This type of judgment comes when we begin to analyze our impressions of what a work of art means to us. Because evaluation informs judgment, it is a vital component in art criticism. This study is concerned with aesthetic understanding, not art criticism, therefore evaluation is not considered a major component of this study. Nonetheless, teaching for the aesthetic experience must include some element of evaluation because it provides students with an opportunity to strengthen their aesthetic voices by articulating their thoughts about a work.

F. David Martin and Lee Jacobus, who believe that "to evaluate a work of art is to judge its artistic merits" (67), suggest using three fundamental standards when engaging in evaluative criticism: the level of perfection, the level of insight gained from examining the artwork, and the potential the artwork holds for further discovery at future viewing sessions, which they refer to as the artwork's potential for "inexhaustibility" (69).

According to Martin and Jacobus, "an artistic form in which everything works together may be called perfect" (69-70). The level of perfection refers to our assessment of how well the form and content of an artwork creates a cohesive whole, or how well it satisfies our understanding of perfection. To help us evaluate a work, we might ask several questions: What is the meaning of this object? How successful is the artist in revealing this meaning? What might the artist have done differently to reveal this meaning? What ideas can I, as an artist, glean from this object for use in my own work?

For Martin and Jacobus, a work of art "satisfies the standard of insight if it makes some significant difference in the way we live our lives" (70). By asking personally significant questions about an artwork, we struggle to gain a deeper understanding of the artwork; in the same manner, we gain insight. Once we answer some of our questions, the deeper understanding or level of insight--reflection--is possible. By reflecting on the conclusions drawn from our evaluative efforts, we are led to still more intrinsic questioning. In

contemplating what has been learned about an object, we necessarily, if only indirectly, contemplate the self. This level of reflection becomes even more profound if the object is viewed again at a later date and new insights about the work and the self are discovered.

An artwork's "inexhaustibility" is determined by the strength of its content. According to Martin and Jacobus, "the richer the interpretation of the subject matter--the more intense our participation, for we have more to keep us involved in the work" (70). That is, each time we see the work, we discover something new. If the object is determined to possess some level of inexhaustibility, over time meaning continues to reveal itself, leading to deeper insight and further questioning.

Evaluating the quality of a work of art by reflecting--in a conversational format--on its level of perfection, the level of personal insight gained, and it's level of inexhaustibility encourages us to critique the significance the artwork holds for us personally and to hypothesize about the meaning the artwork may hold for others. Such reflection helps us articulate the subjective meaning of a work and encourages a dialogue with others--what do *you* think? why do you think that?

Evaluating our own creative efforts is equally important when teaching for the aesthetic experience, because it encourages us to reflect on the trajectory we take during the creative process and to consider how alternative choices might change the surface quality of

the final product. These reflections can open us up to new ways of working, thus providing us with more informed aesthetic experience during the creative process.

1. 12. Summary

To understand the aesthetic experience, I first had to acquire a vocabulary appropriate to the discussion of art viewing and art making. In researching theories of Western aesthetics and what constitutes an aesthetic experience with a work of art, I realized that I had progressed through what Housen and Parsons refer to as stages of aesthetic development and that this development enabled me to enjoy more informed aesthetic experiences with works of art. As such, I sought to define the components of aesthetic experience and to consider how each could be incorporated into a learning environment that fosters aesthetic experience. Because art viewing and art making are catalysts for aesthetic experience, both disciplines would be included in this approach. In addition to the five components of aesthetic experience (perception, cognition, imagination, emotion and discovery), teaching for the aesthetic experience should include an evaluative element to provide students with an opportunity to judge the level of perfection, level of insight, and level of inexhaustibility of a work of art. Art viewing, art making, and evaluation became the tools I used in the study to foster aesthetic understanding.

Existing work by educators and educational researchers helped me formulate a design for and approach to this study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature that helped me design each part of the study.

2. THE EDUCATORS AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Considering the importance of the components of aesthetic experience when designing the case study, I prefaced my research with this question: "What effect, if any, does conversation have on the aesthetic understanding of six women art educators?" Implicit in the phrasing of the question are the notions of *conversation* as a teaching method and *aesthetic understanding* as an awareness of the components of aesthetic experience that enables us to develop our aesthetic capacity. The *women art educators* were adult professionals who, as study participants, functioned as adult learners. The literature that helped me create the framework for this study is discussed in this chapter.

Section 2.1. focuses on the concept of conversation as a teaching method. Section 2.2. reviews theories of aesthetic development, which I refer to as *aesthetic understanding* in the context of this study. Section 2.3. reviews suggestions for facilitating aesthetic experiences in the museum setting. Section 2. 4. addresses first theories of adult development, and, next recommendations of adult learning theorists for designing curricula that respect the needs of adult learners. Section 2. 5. provides the chapter summary.

2. 1. Conversation as a Teaching Method

Conversation as a teaching method, according to Jill Mattuck Tarule, "is a stance [that] no longer sees pedagogy as mere technique for presenting material, but requires a relatively unique level of involvement of learners and teachers together in the pursuit of knowing. [It is then that] learning becomes a 'conversation'" (288).

Turn taking, or giving each participant in the conversation an opportunity to voice a position regarding the topic at hand, is at the core of conversation as a teaching method. In the process of turn taking, "each participant takes on the character and power of the process as a whole" (Campbell 26). That is, rather than inscribing a position, conversation provides an opportunity for expanding a position, as the responses of other participants offer the speaker an opportunity for reflection. In this way, conversation provides an arena to develop language, as the speaker attempts to convey in words previously unspoken or incomplete thoughts.

Conversational teaching methods derive from the sociological study of Conversation Analysis (see Arminen, Have, Hutchby and Wooftltt, Sacks, Senge). The objective of Conversation Analysis, is to "describe the competencies and procedures involved in the production of any type of social interaction" (Arminen 251). Further, Arminen claims, any conversation, whether in a sociological setting or the classroom:

> cannot be represented with a closed set of formal rules that would allow an infallible prediction of the next possible conversational move. Instead, every next conversational move renews our understanding of

> the prior move, so that each turn at talk orients to a preceding context, but also recreates the context anew (251).

In any setting that utilizes conversation, a general topic is introduced until each participant in the discussion is given an opportunity to speak broadly on the topic. As Arminen notes, the absence of a pre-set of objectives allows that "interesting things may simply be noticed" by group participants (256). Next, a focus line is chosen from the set of "noticed things," and the major body of the conversation consists of, to use Arminen's term, "collaborative elaboration of patterns found" (256). As patterns of thought are discussed and scrutinized, the conversation becomes more focused, until very few or only a single topic is being addressed. Participants are encouraged to voice a position about the topic, as this level of social interaction forms the basis of learning through conversation. That is, by explaining our thinking to others, and by listening to their voices in return, our original thoughts are often expanded upon, as we consider new angles and possibilities to our subjective stance.

Educators who advocate conversational teaching methods recommend providing a format for women learners that is both comfortable and challenging, where sharing personal experience is encouraged by listening to the voices of others. In the process, these educators believe that our own experiences are expanded upon and informed. The educators who advocate conversation as a teaching method, and have informed this study, are bell hooks, Phyllis Walden, and Kathleen Taylor.

2. 1. 1. bell hooks

The perception that personal experience serves as the foundation for meaning is at the core of what bell hooks calls "engaged pedagogy," which she defines as "not merely shar[ing] information, but [sharing] in the intellectual and spiritual growth of students" (13). Hooks contends that the most successful way to teach for "engaged pedagogy" is by structuring courses around a "conversational format," where "everyone feels a responsibility to contribute to the learning community" (40). Hooks concedes that "the exciting aspect of creating a classroom community where there is respect for individual voices is that there is infinitely more feedback, because students do feel free to talk-- and talk back" (42).

Hooks acknowledges that talking and talking back, whether about reflections on personal experience or about pertinent course material, can lead to "conflict" between the students themselves or between students and teacher. Instead of minimizing the discomfort that conflict can cause, hooks believes that conflict should be used as a "catalyst for new ways of thinking and growth"--an important objective for my research because there is no proper or right way to look at and interpret a work of art (113). The construction of meaning that accompanies a personal reflection about a work of art is often in discord with another's construction of meaning; this results from the unique cultural, ethnic, and gender characteristics of the individual viewer. The ability to engage in productive dialogue

about emotional conflict caused by such discrepancies can certainly be viewed as a "catalyst for new ways of thinking and growth."

The characteristics of "engaged pedagogy" previously described are elements of what hooks defines as a "feminist classroom" (111-117). Feminist art educators, such as Linnea Dietrich and Diane Smith-Hurd who contend that their "primary goal is to empower students and to have them become collaborators in their own learning and not mere receptacles for data" (44), agree with hooks that a conversational format to teaching respects the personal experience of students and often recognizes the cultural, racial, and religious affiliations that are at the heart of these experiences. Feminist art educator Sally Hagaman recommends the conversational format when engaging in aesthetic dialogue in the classroom, no matter the age of the students. Like other feminist philosophers, she suggests that "the use of conversation [is] the most effective means to deal with philosophical issues. This approach stands in fairly sharp contrast to the idea of the debate, the exchange of practiced philosophical moves . . . which has characterized much of philosophical inquiry" (32). While employing conversational methods as a teaching strategy and reflecting on personal experience have become legitimate routes to intellectual inquiry (Dewey, Belenky et al., hooks, Kolb,), educators remind us that these methods surpass the needs of women learners and are equally appropriate for the education of men (Mahar, Mahar and Tetreault).

2. 1. 2. Phyllis Walden

While employing conversation as a teaching strategy is the main concern of the educators who have influenced my research, getting the conversation started is the main concern for other educational strategists. To begin the conversation, educators concerned with creating learning environments appropriate for adult women learners suggest journal writing. Phyllis Walden believes that:

> Through reflective writing, each writer learns to step back from the immediacy of her subjective experience, shift perspective, and generate and examine options. . . . A journal offers an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the self in ways that further a women's development as a constructed knower; it will help her understand the rich context of her life and the questions she faces in her multiple roles. (14)

Walden suggests the following journal-writing formats, which she believes are familiar to most women, to begin the journal-writing process:

- **Freewriting** "Writing whatever comes to mind without attention to mechanics, spelling, or grammar" (14).
- **List making** "Lists of favorite words, questions, things to write about. . . . The simple process of making a list, which is routine for most women, can in fact be an empowering tool for composing oneself and one's life" (14-15).
- **Dialogue** "Just as students need to deepen their awareness of themselves as knowers, they also need to broaden their understanding of the overall context of their lives. Therefore I

invite students to dialogue in their journals with historical and cultural factors or events that have influenced their lives" (18).

As students become comfortable sharing the content of private journaling, a more public conversation can take place. In the process, students can begin, to use Belenkey et al's term "stretching and sharing" as they reflect on the immediate and often fluctuating thinking of their peers. When our subjective ideas are shared with others, their responses to our thoughts can stretch our personal perspectives, allowing us to move beyond our original assessments. Kathleen Taylor reminds us that the word "assess . . . is from the Latin for 'to sit beside.' Self-assessment, therefore can be seen as sitting beside the self" (22).

2. 1. 3. Kathleen Taylor

To sit beside the self, Taylor believes, is to reflect on subjective knowing. When reflection compels us to ponder alternative concepts and evaluations, a more "sophisticated construction of meaning" takes place, which is how Taylor defines "development" (21-22). This heightened level of self-awareness allows students to exercise self-assessment, which Taylor believes "is both a process and a product: it is an act of self-reflection as well as a written exercise that may be assigned at various points as a learner's education progresses to help her focus on her process of learning" (22). While Taylor acknowledges that self-assessment alone cannot guarantee "development," she believes that "the requirements for

development--that we become aware of our rules of meaning making, so that we can see that we have made the meaning which governs our lives--suggest that such self-reflection is certainly an important part" (25).

Referring to the open-ended interviews (i.e., questions that "permit respondents to respond in their own terms [Patton 295]) conducted by Perry (see section 2. 4. 1.) and Belenky et al. (see section 2. 4. 2.), Taylor reminds us that self-assessment can happen before any journaling exercise is assigned. Hearing their own responses to interview questions, informants in Belenky et al.'s study were on occasion apt to change their perception of the experience even as they spoke about it, having been given, in the course of the interview, an opportunity to reflect on it from a more distant and oftentimes more informed point of view. Perry, too, found that when the students he interviewed verbally described their own experiences, their "reports of such moments . . . reveal[ed], both implicitly and explicitly, (a) the structure of the earlier experiences which had proved inadequate, (b) the structure of the new interpretation which resolved the incongruity, and (c) the transitional process by which the new structure was created" (*Forms* 42). Open-ended interviewing can trigger self-assessment, even as the interviewee speaks about the experience.

Taylor concurs with Perry and Kegan; Because students can be assumed to be in different stages of knowing at any time in the trajectory of a course, "not everyone is developmentally ready to sit

beside the self, or they may not know how--they may not know what self-assessment looks like or how valuable it is" (27). Like Belenky et al., Taylor believes that a learning environment that meets the needs of adult women learners has to be structured and must allow for a degree of movement or freedom within assigned tasks or study session schedules. Taylor concludes:

> We need to provide guidance, initially perhaps in the form of questions for reflection and certainly in the form of positive feedback whenever self-assessment accomplishes the desired end of truly self-reflective observation. (27)

While needs assessment, conversation, journaling, and self-assessment are recommended to assist learners in developing their cognitive potential, educational strategists remind us that there are boundaries to these methods, although, as Fiddler and Marienau point out, "The extent to which it is appropriate to enter the lives of our students beyond the formalities of the curriculum is not always clear" (80). Fiddler and Marienau contend that creating and respecting boundaries of what we ask students to write about, share with others, self-assess, and otherwise bring into the learning environment:

> Is particularly challenging as we further our understanding and recognition that the women (and men) with whom we work bring to the formal educational setting a myriad of developmental, experiential, cultural, and other dimensions that influence their motivations and q purposes for seeking and making meaning of new learning (80).

Ethics about such boundaries should be discussed at the beginning of any learning experience and adhered to without exception.

This last consideration notwithstanding, adapting the aforementioned strategies of adult learning theorists and the

educational strategists for implementing conversational teaching methods offers both teachers and learners new avenues to manage their learning, provides opportunity to develop a student's capacity for understanding, contributes to the development of others, and allows us to apply this deepened awareness to many areas of our lives.

2. 2. Aesthetic Development

As is the case with adult learning theorists who draw on general theories of adult development (see section 2. 4.), aesthetic developmental theorists view aesthetic development as a subset of more general theories of development. For example, the two theories of aesthetic development that will occupy us here--specifically, those of Abigail Housen and Michael Parson--compare and connect to Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development and Jane Loevinger's theory of Ego development, and to Kohlberg's theory of moral development and Jean Piaget's and David Feldman's theories of cognitive development, respectively.

Both Housen and Parsons acknowledge previous studies of aesthetic development--in all cases the aesthetic development of children--for providing them with the groundwork for their own studies (see Brunner, Coffey, Parsons, "A Suggestion"). Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, whose theory of what constitutes an expert aesthetic experience will be discussed here as well, build their

framework around Monroe Beardsley's theory of what constitutes an aesthetic experience and Csikszentmihalyi's own theory of "flow."

Believing that aesthetic development has significance in a broader realm of development is known in aesthetic circles as the *consequential theory* (Eaton 129). While the writings of Leo Tolstoy, Anthony Savile, and Hilary Putnam are more contemporary examples of the consequentialist school, the consequentialist paradigm was first considered by Aristotle, who believed that art contributed to a better life by satisfying human needs and desires. In particular, Aristotle acknowledged the theater to be the perfect arena for spectators to purge themselves of an overwhelming emotional state and to replace it with a more cathartic balance. Further, Aristotle believed that in viewing the often stoic behavior of the actors toward the extreme consequences they faced in the implied reality of the stage, the spectator would be taught how to conduct himself under similar circumstances should those circumstances arise on the stage of real life. According to Eaton, "locating aesthetic value in moral consequences or in what we can learn is at the core of contemporary consequentialist theories of aesthetic value" (130). That is, one who enjoys a heightened awareness of aesthetic value will most likely adhere to a similar level of moral, cognitive, ethical,--or any other aspect of,--development.

Housen and Parsons,--who also share the belief that aesthetic understanding is sequential and developmental, can be understood in progressive stages, and can be measured by our verbal

responses,--conducted open-ended interviews with adolescents to older adults, and with pre-school children up to older adults, respectively, as the basis for data collection.

Using a five-stage model to explain progressive development, both researchers agree that while the stages are sequential and developmental, they are only age related to a certain extent, as increased exposure to art impacts aesthetic development beyond age alone. That is, while these theories remain consequential in their adherence to other developmental theories, aesthetic development relies on exposure to aesthetic objects; age alone cannot guarantee an increased aesthetic awareness.

2. 2. 1. Abigail Housen

In "The Eye of the Beholder: Measuring Aesthetic Response," Abigail Housen sought to develop a method for coding aesthetic responses. Relying on adolescent and adult informants, Housen used an open-ended, stream-of-consciousness method for interviewing subjects. This approach allowed informants to respond to reproductions of paintings with their own voices, expressing their immediate reactions. Based on her findings, Housen developed a five-stage model of aesthetic response, which is presented below in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Housen's Five-Stage Model of Aesthetic Response

The stage I viewer who Housen refers to as the "Accountive" viewer is no younger than 16 and has a mean age 19.5 years. The main question this viewer asks is "what?" as in "what is that? what [is] the work of art . . . about?" (178). This viewer "responds freely and immediately to the artwork noticing details from which he will construct his stories. He reads the artwork like an opaque surface hunting for what stands out. Often this is but an unconscious reflection of self" (168).
The stage II viewer ("Constructive") is no younger than 16 and has a mean age of 27.4 years. The main question for this viewer is "how?," as in "how is it done?" The constructive viewer's "feelings begin to be submerged as the viewer focuses on creating a structure for understanding the work of art. The meaning that this viewer makes from his perceptions revolves around his need to construct this most skeletal frame for connecting his diverse observations; observations which come not only from the work of art in front of him, but from various realms of his own world (168).
The stage III viewer who Housen refers to as the "Classifying" stage is at least 21 and has a mean age 29.8 years. The main question for this viewer is "who?" or "why?" This viewer wants to know "who did this [artwork]?" (180) and "why the artist left those particular clues [i.e., marks, brush strokes, subjects] on the canvas" (180). The classifying viewer's "emotive responses have been waived for those critical skills that are needed to decode the work of art. The work has now become layered, requiring the viewer to dig deeply below the surface, in order to read the artwork's hidden message" (168-169). Housen notes that stage III may be hard to obtain for adolescence because the analytic capabilities and critical skills needed for this stage may not develop until late adolescence.
The stage IV viewer ("Interpretive") is no younger than 25 and has a mean age of 40.8 years. The main question for this viewer is "when," as in "when do feelings generated by the work of art appear or reappear?" (180). In this stage "emotions return full-blown. However unlike the stage I viewer, at stage IV the viewer can reflect on his emotional response to the artwork interpreting how the expressive features have become enjoined with those formal details as message-bearers for the work of art. For this viewer the work of art is like a prism whose multi-faceted surface is continually reflecting illusive beams of light about which he can marvel and speculate" (169).
For **the stage V viewer** ("re-creative") who is no younger than 52 and has a mean age of 60 years, "there is no longer one central question that dominates the aesthetic response but, rather, one notes an interplay among various questions" (181). For this viewer, "thought balances feelings as the viewer is able to both enter the world of the artwork and yet reflect on the object, self and the aesthetic experience" (169).

Adapted from Abigail Housen. "The Eye of the Beholder: Measuring Aesthetic Response." Diss. Harvard University, 1983.

To obtain a level of expert aesthetic experience, Housen believes that:

> the viewer must balance several polar elements. The viewer must treat the object as if it were real, taking the work of art seriously, believing in it. To do this, the viewer must attend fully to the object as it is presented. Moreover, he [or she] must attend to the object for its own sake. Further, the viewer must look for and listen for the expression of feelings within the aesthetic object which refers to the human experience (169).

Parsons, Csikszentmihalyi, and Robinson, whose work is outlined in the following sections, articulate similar strategies for achieving an expert aesthetic experience.

2. 2. 2. Michael Parsons

The basic argument posited by Michael Parsons in *How We Understand Art* is that people respond differently to paintings because they understand them differently. For this reason, Parsons contends that each stage of development is characterized by a dominant idea. Parsons constructs five sequential stages of aesthetic development. Each stage can be seen as a "loosely knit structure in which a number of ideas are shaped about a dominant insight about art. This central insight is new for each stage and gives it its characteristic form" (20). Parsons argues that these stages are a developmental account of the aesthetic experience, as "each step is an advance on the previous one because it makes possible a more adequate understanding of art" (5). These developmental stages, which he describes simply as stages one through five, include four general categories: (1) *subject matter,* which includes color and is the dominant idea of stages one and two, with color more important in stage one and subject matter more important in stage two; (2)

expression, which is the dominant idea in stage three; (3) *medium, form* and *style,* which is the dominant idea in stage four; and (4) *judgment*, which is the dominant idea in stage five. While Parsons believes that expression, medium, form, and style are not apparent to the stage one and stage two viewer, he contends that judgments act as a "a continuation of our experience of a painting" and are present in some form in all of the stages (121). Other than stage one, which typically involves the aesthetic understanding of pre-school children, the stages do not appear to be age related; an adult can be associated with the same stage as an adolescent. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the five stages according to Parsons.

TABLE 2

Parsons' Five Stages of Aesthetic Development

Stage One: Found primarily in pre-school aged children, the dominant idea in stage one is "color," followed closely by subject, which often amounts to the same thing: "Color is the subject. The more the better" (22). The essential feature of stage one is viewer egocentricism, which Parsons defines as "the lack of distinction between the perceptions of self and others. Stage one viewers don't understand, nor care, that others might not see what they see" (30). Because stage one viewers see all paintings as "good," they naturally "like all paintings" (22).
Stage Two: The dominant idea of stage two is that "paintings picture things" (39). At stage two, a painting is best if it is about beautiful things and it portrays them realistically. Just as a painting of a "beautiful" subject is "good of its kind" (41), so too a painting of an "ugly," subject [is], by contrast, . . . poor of its kind" (42). Unlike the stage one viewer who sees all art as good, the stage two viewer can distinguish between good and bad. As a result, unlike the stage one viewer who "likes all paintings," the stage two viewer judges the merit of the painting on the artist's ability to depict "beauty, realism, and skill" (22).

Continued on next page

Stage Three: "Expression" is the dominant idea in this stage. This viewer will "genuinely experience the expressiveness of the painting" (76). Representational realism, so important in the earlier stages, "loses its appeal," (55) and is replaced with "emotional realism" (56). The stage three viewer's feelings about the painting, based on her own experience, are as important, if not more so, than the artist's original intentions. For this reason, stage three viewers judge the merits of artworks, not on their technical success, but on "how objects make us feel" (132).
Stage Four: The dominant idea in stage four is "style," which was not apparent to viewers in earlier stages. Style can be thought of as the "interaction between the artist and the medium" (25). Just as the stage four viewer understands the communication between the artist and the art object through the use of style, this viewer understands how "dialogu[ing] about our judgments with others in an effort to see what they see . . . [can] enrich our own experience. [At this stage], facts fill our descriptions of the painting and serve as our reasons for judgments" (139).
Stage Five: "Judgment," which is "the self-conscious articulation of the meanings we find in the painting and our sense of their value" (123), is the dominant idea in stage five. We are aware of our preferences in judging and how these influence our judgments. Ultimately, we judge favorably what we like, but we can like much more and extrapolate what we like from what we don't. At this stage, "our experience [with the art object] needs constant reinterpretation if we are to avoid mistakes about our needs and feelings. Otherwise, we will take for granted old perceptions and interpretations of them. Art helps us to get clear about our experience, and ourselves, as well as we ever can. In the end, its function is to make our inner nature transparent, both to ourself and to others" (150).

Adapted from Michael Parsons. *How We Understand Art: A Cognitive Account of Aesthetic Experience.* New York: Cambridge, 1987.

Like Housen, Parsons' five-stage theory rests on our increasing ability to take on the perspective of others, the common dimension of any cognitive developmental scheme. Also, like Housen, Parsons contends that because the stage five viewer possesses all the characteristics of the earlier stages, as well as a set of unique characteristics, the stage five viewer enjoys the most expert aesthetic experience. Examining what constitutes the expert aesthetic experience is at the core of Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's investigation, *The Art of Seeing.*

2. 2. 3. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Rick Robinson

Believing museum professionals to be "sensitive to the aesthetic value of objects" and therefore expert at "understanding the nature of the aesthetic experience" (20), Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson asked museum professionals "to describe a recent encounter with a work of art that they felt was particularly significant" (27). According to Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, the majority of respondents spoke of more than one aspect of their experience. These can be briefly described in four ways:

> [1] a perceptual response, which concentrated on elements such as balance, form, and harmony; [2] an emotional response, which emphasized reactions to the emotional content of the work and personal associations; [3] an intellectual response, which focused on theoretical and art historical questions; and [4] what was characterized as the communicative response, wherein there was a desire to relate to the artist, or to his or her time, or to his or her culture, through mediation of the work of art." (28)

Below, Table 3 outlines the four dimensions of aesthetic experience according to Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson.

TABLE 3

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's Four Dimensions of Aesthetic Experience

The perceptual response, which involves describing the object through its formal qualities, "was often mentioned first and was most often the dimension most clearly articulated" (29). These descriptions included the physicality of the actual object (i.e., size, scale, and presence) and beauty (i. e., whether symmetrical, lyrical, or technical). The perceptual response often included the use of other senses (e.g., touch, when picking up a ceramic bowl or wearing a piece of jewelry) and, similarly, pointing out evidence of the artist's presence by the marks left on the object.
An emotional response was mentioned by 90 percent of respondents, even though they were constantly surrounded by great art; that is, emotions did not decrease with high levels exposure (34). Emotional descriptors often included feelings of nostalgia, love, hate, anger, and rage (34). Interviewees often commented that emotional feelings increased the longer they viewed the work of art. According to Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, "It became evident that this variance of emotional response was related to the interplay of affective and intellectual modes of constructing the art object" (40-41).
An intellectual response (i. e., knowledge of art history, the object's role in the culture that produced it) was often mentioned by the interviewee after perception and emotion were examined. For some interviewees, the intellectual response was problematic because it got in the way of enjoying the object on its own merits. However, the majority of respondents often cited the intellectual dimension as deepening the aesthetic experience. Some respondents used an intellectual response for "closure," that is, to get to the bottom of the "problem" or to solve the "puzzle" of the object's meaning (49). Others used an intellectual response to achieve openness, that is, "to assist in more varied interpretations [and] to enhance the breadth and depth of their understanding" (49). The majority of museum professionals studied (nearly 75%) felt that "achieving an understanding of a piece's place in the culture that produced it constituted an obstacle to pure appreciation of a work, but [was] an obstacle worth surmounting" (50). These museum professionals explained that knowledge of art history allows the viewer to contemplate how the object exemplified the larger culture in which it was produced. As one interviewee explained, "The work of art and the artist who produced it act as a representative of the cultural milieu for most curators, and decides the monetary/historical value of the piece" (56). In other words, "the intention of the artist represented not only the key to particular works but to the aesthetic experience, i.e., why did the artist use crayon?, chalk?, etc." (57).

Continued on next page

The communicative response is the viewer's dialogue with the work, and according to one participant, "the more time spent with a work of art, the more of a dialogue will happen" (62). The dialogues that were described most often fell into three general categories: (1) communication with an era or culture; (2) communication with an artist; and (3) communication within the viewer. Some interviewees dialogued with the artist through the work, while others dialogued with the subject of the artwork, as a way to "stimulate their imagination[s]" (66). Further, while some interviewees explained that specific colors, shapes, or scenes could evoke in them certain feelings that were "associated with measurable experiences" (67), others felt that there could be a danger in trying to verbalize the aesthetic response because "it has nothing to do with words at all" (68).

Adapted from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Rick Robinson. *The Art of Seeing*. Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum and the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1990.

2. 3. Facilitating for Aesthetic Experience

2. 3. 1. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson make recommendations for facilitating for aesthetic experience, hoping to encourage less expert viewers into a deeper communication with the art object. These recommendations are to:

- Consider "the large, simple environment of the art museum, free of outside disturbances, [which] limits competing information and embodies the initial condition of freedom from distraction" (142).
- Give looking time, as "another condition basic to the aesthetic experience is the amount of time available for viewing and being with a work of art" (144).
- "[Look] at one object in context with others, which can be a great learning experience as juxtapositions and relationships to other works of that period, culture, other artists or art made during different times in the same artist's career often happen" (146).

- Determine to enter the object for the aesthetic experience to happen. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson define *determinability* as the "perceived opportunity to find, on a fairly direct level, some point of entry into the object" (147). Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson believe that "determinability is a sub-set of the communication aspect of the aesthetic experience" and provides the challenge to "learn more, to uncover, and to discover" (149).
- Anticipate a reward. "[Expect] that enjoyment will result from viewing art" (160). However, as one curator in Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's study states, "It is imperative that you work at it. . . . it's work to get that information out of a work of art" (160).
- Accept support. "Given that an encounter with art often requires both considerable work and the use of a whole range of skills, it should come as no surprise to learn that support is also necessary, some form of encouragement and direction that might lead viewers to engage themselves with a measure of conviction" (161).
- Focus on one work of art for a long period of time in context with similar images. As one curator in the study attests, "'Pictures are set next to one another or with objects in such a way 'that it allows one to do a certain amount of comparison' on one's own" (168).
- Be prepared. "If they are to obtain maximum benefit from the experience, viewers simply cannot enter the museum empty-

handed; they need skills, especially visual ones, and they need practice" (169).

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's study has influenced museum educators who desire to facilitate a more pleasant and educational experience for their visitors, using the interview protocols for their own research efforts.

Melora McDermott-Lewis sought to understand and interpret the museum experience not of the expert but of the "novice" (visitors with limited art background [6]) and the "advanced amateur" (people with a great deal of knowledge about art, but who pursued it as an avocation versus a vocation [6]). According to McDermott-Lewis's research, the aesthetic criteria valued by novices includes: prettiness; recognizable, pleasant subject matter; lots of detail (proves "talent"); and an easily accessible message (see Chambers 102). French Impressionist art was often mentioned as "pleasing" for this group. McDermott-Lewis found that, for the most part, novices rarely if ever comprehend art terms and "give no indication they even think about the artist as making deliberate choices in color, composition, etc. to create a work" (20). That is, novices do *not* understand that the artist can control the feeling he or she is trying to convey; rather, they believe that emotions depicted in or conveyed by a painting are purely accidental. Finally, according to McDermott-Lewis, novices like to go "envision themselves in another time or place or theorize about what the subject . . . or the artist was like" (18).

In contrast, McDermott-Lewis found that the museum experiences of advanced amateurs are very diverse and therefore difficult to summarize. As a whole, according to McDermott-Lewis, advanced amateurs tend to (1) understand the control of the artist (i.e., the artist's ability to control the feeling he or she is trying to convey), (2) challenge themselves to view works of art that will "stretch their minds," (3) can appreciate "modern art," and (4) are not afraid to add an element of "intellect" to their otherwise "emotional" aesthetic encounter with a work of art.

In assessing the differences between the art novice's experiences with works of art and those of the expert, McDermott-Lewis concluded that although novices are interested in the cultural context and the artist's perspective, they usually have little information, and sometimes much misinformation, in these areas. In contrast, "experts," according to Patterson Williams, "have a body of knowledge and a set of interpretive skills that allow them ready access to the human quality of artworks" (77). However, a revealing similarity was that "both novices and experts considered looking at a work of art as a rewarding way of getting in touch with another human life" (77).

John Falk and Lynn Dierking, noting that all visitors experience the museum setting differently--depending on variables such as frequency of attendance, the expectations with which the visitors arrive, and the knowledge and experience they bring to their visit--created an "interactive experience model" to explain each museum

visitor's experience (1). The "interactive experience model" can be visualized as a set of three intersecting spheres and includes the personal, social, and physical contexts of a museum visit that are both unique and universal for each visitor. Falk and Dierking contend that "all museum visits involve these three contexts; they are the windows through which we can view the visitor's perspective" (2). Finally, the authors maintain, that "museums, perhaps more than other educational institutions, are uniquely suited to capitalize on [the] capacity for humans to learn initially by assimilating concrete information" (77).

In an effort to better understand the "interactive experiences" of their visitors, several art museums have conducted their own visitor-oriented research projects. The Getty Center for Education in the Arts found that visitors to the J. Paul Getty Museum "connect with specific objects," and that "the museum environment fosters communication about related subjects," because it "provides an arena for shared communication as well as self-discovery and introspection" (*Insights* 14). A study of the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) found that visitors came to the museum for "spiritual, educational, and aesthetic reasons," as well as to "experience the past" and "see old friends" (i.e., the works of art) (*Visitor's Voice* xvii). In the same study, visitors to the CMA reported that "the title and subject of a work of art were the two most important pieces of information for them" (xvi).

While the data collected from these visitor-oriented studies provides valuable insights for museum curators, they also show that most visitors' experiences with works of art fall short of what has been deemed by Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson as an "expert" aesthetic experience, that is, an individual's ability to view a work of art through one or all of the following figurative lenses: emotional, perceptual, communicative, and intellectual.

Data from visitor-oriented studies have prompted museum educators to create, for their novice or infrequent museum visitors, hands-on exhibits that encourage a richer, deeper aesthetic experience with the art objects. Dana Baldwin of the Portland (Maine) Art Museum has created an interactive exhibit based on David Kolb's theory of the four learning quadrants: accomodator, diverger, converger, assimilator (personal communication, 1997 [also, see Kolb]). Doug Worts of the Art Gallery of Toronto posed this question: "How do personal meanings related to viewing an artwork--ones that do not necessarily fit into the critical framework for understanding objects--function in an art gallery setting?" (45). In an effort to answer this question, he installed "share your response" cards for visitors to fill out in the museum's introductory exhibit. Worts notes that in their responses, people often drew pictures of themselves looking at a work of art, and explained the significance of the pictures in accompanying text. According to Worts, "people seem to want to see themselves reflected either literally or symbolically in their imagery-- and in their writing. This

has been an important psychological phenomenon for gallery staff to become aware of--people want to see themselves reflected in their visits to museums" (48). Marlene Chambers and Helen Muir of the Denver Art Museum created interactive, discovery-driven labels to accompany many of their exhibits, along with written materials such as "Learning to Look--A Coaching Brochure for Art Novices." When interviewed, novice visitors responded that they found such materials "encouraging and helpful" (122).

2. 3. 2. David Perkins

In *The Intelligent Eye: Learning to Think by Looking at Art,* David Perkins suggests relying on "reflective intelligence" to look at art. Perkins defines *reflective intelligence* as "the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to mental self-management" (82). According to Perkins, engaging in reflective intelligence, rather than more common practices of critical assessment or aesthetic judgment, enables us "to arrive at more varied and deeper readings of the work of art before our eyes," as we are less concerned with placing judgment on the work but learning to think by spending time with the work (82). Perkins suggests the following viewing practices to trigger reflective intelligence:

- "Slow looking down [in order to] give looking time" (41).

Then:

- "Position yourself. Beware of placing yourself too close. Find a good distance, where the work coalesces into a whole (but feel free to move in and out)" (41).
- "Resolve to look for at least three to five minutes. This will help you stick with the work" (41).

Then. . .

- "Let your eyes work for you. Automatically, as you look, your experiential intelligence will seek meaning of many kinds" (41).
- "Let questions emerge. Don't feel that seeing consists entirely in reaching conclusions. Especially for something as complex as art often is, seeing puzzlement's that may get resolved later is an important part of the experience" (41).
- "Let what you know inform your looking--what you know in general, about art in particular, and about the source culture and era of the work. Let your knowledge come forward to tune your vision" (41).
- "Tell yourself when you notice interesting features. Label them in words you can say to yourself. Or, imagine underlining them or drawing a circle around them on the work. Or, take notes. Any of these actions heightens your awareness of what you are seeing" (41-42).

As you look longer . . .

- "When the flow stops, look away for a few seconds, then look back. Looking away helps to refresh your eyes" (42).

- "As you keep looking, you will not only discover new features but resee features you found before with more familiarity and fluency. Enjoy this part of the experience, too, as you get to know your way around the work" (42).
- "Ask, what's going on here? If there is an event or story you haven't figured out, do so" (52).
- "Look for surprises--a startling color, an odd object, an unexpected relationship. Where and how does the work surprise you, in big ways or in little" (52).
- "Look for mood or personality. What mood or personality does the work project? Never mind if it doesn't show a person or animal. Strong moods or personalities often shine through abstract works, landscapes, or still lifes" (52).
- "Look for symbolism and meaning. Does the artist have a message? What might it be?" (52).
- "Look for motion. Many works depict motion directly and vividly--running horses, a bird in flight. Others do not represent action, but the lines, the texture, the spatial form, carry a powerful message of motion anyway" (52-53).
- "Look for capturing a time or place. Many works engulf the viewer in a very specific spatial and temporal locus" (53).
- "Look for cultural and historical connections: the car as central to the American way of life, for instance" (53).
- "Look for space and negative space. Sculpture and many works of art on a two-dimensional surface represent bodies in space. Look

for the shapes in and of the object, and the negative space around the object as well" (53).

- "Look for specific 'technical' dimensions. Ask yourself to notice colors and how they relate; the major shapes and how they balance or unbalance one another; the use of line, jagged, smooth, quick, careful" (53).
- "Shift your scale. Look for big things, overall structure, detail" (53).
- "Look for virtuosity. What features of the work appear really hard to do? What features appear easy but might actually be hard?" (53).
- "To draw a moral. Often the hidden--the technical mechanism of a work--is the gateway to what waits--the aesthetic dimensions of the work" (64).
- "Go back to something that surprised you. . . .Why did the artist do that?" (64).
- "Go back to something that interested you. . . . How did the artist get that effect?" (64).
- "Try to unravel the puzzle [about the work]" (64).
- "Look for the technical underpinnings" (64).
- "Make mental changes. What would happen if you changed a color, a material, an object?" (64).
- "Look for reinforcement across the work, ways the artist handles things in one part to strengthen an effect in another part or an overall effect" (64).

- "Look for technical features in the work; the handling of line, color, form, composition. The layout of the work controls how the eye moves around the work. Probe how the work functions as a mechanism to engage your vision and thinking" (64).
- "Compare the work with another you know that relates in some way--by the same artist, or from the same period, or concerning the same topic" (64).

Think in words to help you manage your reasoning . . .

- "Articulate to yourself your questions and possible resolutions" (65).
- "If you are interpreting the work, put into words what you take the message to be" (65).
- "Look for evidence in the work for the conjunctions you make. Are there parts of the work that seem inconsistent with what you are thinking?" (65).
- "Sum it up. In general, try to come up with some specific articulated, well-evidenced conclusions about the work and your experience of it" (65).

Perkins, like the museum educators previously mentioned, encourages looking over evaluation, thinking over assessment, and a consideration of what is learned in the process to inform our overall experience with the work.

2. 4. Theories of Adult Development

Drawing on general theories of adult development such as those found in the works of Eric Erickson, Daniel Levinson, and Gail Sheehy, adult learning theorists seek to explore and create learning environments that maximize adult learning potential (Brookfield, Chickering et al., Kegan [*The Evolving Self*], Kolb, Merriam and Caffarella, Taylor and Marienau). Adult learning theorists derive their general ideas about meaning-making from the tradition of constructivism (Kegan [*The Evolving Self*], Perry [*Cognitive and Ethical Growth*], Belenky et al.,). Constructivists believe that "we do not just passively 'copy' or 'absorb' already organized reality; instead, we ourselves actively give shape and coherence to our experience" (Kegan, In Over Our Heads 199). Contemplating theories of adult development or adult learning in the context of a developmental model is commonly referred to as *subject-object theory*, which, as Kegan explains, is a "constructive-developmental approach to human experience. It looks at the growth or transformation of how we construct meaning" (199).

According to adult learning theorists, the aim of adult education is to support learners as they embark on a developmental journey whose outcome will be an expanded way of knowing (Belenky et al., Brookfield, Kegan, Perry [*Cognitive and Ethical Growth*], Taylor and Marienau). Encouraging students to reflect on meanings made from personal experience, to develop critical thinking skills, which Stephen Brookfield describes as a "[healthy]

skeptic[ism] of claims to final truths or ultimate solutions to problems [that] is open to alternatives and acknowledges the contextuality of knowledge" (21-22); and to "become self-directed learners," who "set their own goals and standards, with or without help from experts [teachers]" (Crow 133-134) are the goals most cited by adult education theorists (Belenky et al., Brookfield, Dewey, hooks, Kegan [*In Over Our Heads*], Kolb, Mezirow, Taylor and Marienau).

Assisting students in recognizing their current level of understanding by (1) leading them in a needs assessment exercise (i. e., the practice of determining the current level of understanding of an individual or group), (2) assigning journal-writing activities that offer an opportunity to reflect on new learning, (3) encouraging students to recognize their subjective selves so they can reflect on current and emerging ways of knowing, and (4) mentoring students in self-evaluation can lead to challenging and rewarding curriculum that respects the needs of adult learners (Belenky et al., Brookfield, Erickson, hooks, Taylor and Marienau).

The principal adult learning theorists whose work provides the framework for this study are:

- William Perry--his theory of development as a trajectory from reliance on absolute truth and authority, to commitment, to a more informed and pluralistic understanding supports the sequence of the study.

- Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule--their research findings contend that, unlike the majority of their male counterparts, women in a relative (i.e., subjective) state of knowing tend not to attempt to imitate authority but, rather reject external authority in favor of an internal voice. These findings are the foundation for the question on which this study is based.
- Robert Kegan--his belief that conditions of confirmation and contradiction must be present to promote growth (continuity) informed the final paper "road map" worksheets, which, together with the personal transcripts taken from study sessions, guided participants to finding a deepened aesthetic understanding.

The following sections elaborate on these three theories.

2. 4. 1. William Perry

In "Cognitive and Ethical Growth: The Making of Meaning," William Perry illustrates the course of development of students' patterns of thought (77). Perry acknowledges that students pass through "positions" of development in their educational trajectories, that these positions are always in flux, and that each student has a unique way of "mov[ing] from a familiar pattern of meanings that had failed them to a new vision that promised to make sense of their broadening experience" (78). Perry's research has shown that the majority of students enter college in a "dualistic" stage of knowing (position 1 on his scale; 79); that is, they rely on the course instructor

to show them the "Right answers" (80) and the correct way of thinking. When presented with evidence that this approach has flaws (i.e., when the course instructor admits that she doesn't know everything), students often feel "bitter" and "poignant" (83), according to Perry. Ultimately, however, such confusion leads to more informed ways of knowing in which the student develops a belief system based on personal ethics and cognition, while at the same time being able to acknowledge the alternative belief structures of others (position 9 on the scale). Table 4 on the next page outlines the Perry scheme.

TABLE 4

The Perry Scheme of Cognitive and Ethical Development

Position 1	Authorities know, and if we work hard, read every word, and learn Right answers, all will be well.
Transition	But what about those Others I hear about? And different opinions? And uncertainties? Some of our own Authorities disagree with each other or don't seem to know, and some give us problems instead of Answers.
Position 2	True Authorities must be Right, and others are frauds. We remain Right. Others must be different and Wrong. Good Authorities give us problems so we can learn to find the Right Answer by our own independent thought.
Transition	But even Good Authorities admit they don't know all the answers *yet!*
Position 3	Then some uncertainties and different opinions are real and legitimate *temporarily*, even for Authorities. They're working on them to get to the truth.
Transition	But there are *so many* things they don't know the Answers to! And they won't for a long time.
Position 4a Transition *(and/or)* Transition *Position 4b*	Where Authorities don't know the Right Answers, everyone has a right to his own opinion; no one is wrong! But some of my friends ask me to support my opinions with facts and reasons. Then what right have They to grade us? About what? In certain courses Authorities are not asking for the Right Answer; They want us to *think* about things in a certain way, *supporting* opinion with data. That's what they grade us on.
Transition	But this "way" seems to *work* in most courses, and even outside them.

Continued on next page

Position 5	Then *all* thinking must be like this, even for Them. Everything is relative but not equally valid. You have to understand how each context works. Theories are not Truth but metaphors to interpret data with. You have to think about your thinking.
Transition	But if everything is relative, am I relative too? How can I know I'm making the Right Choice?
Position 6	I see I'm going to have to make my own decisions in an uncertain world with no one telling me I'm Right.
Transition	I'm lost if I don't. When I decide on my career (or marriage or values) everything will straighten out.
Position 7	Well, I've made my first commitment!
Transition	Why didn't that settle everything?
Position 8	I've made several commitments. I've got to balance them--how many, how deep? How certain, how tentative?
Transition	Things are getting contradictory. I can't make logical sense out of life's dilemmas.
Position 9	This is how life will be. I must be wholehearted while tentative, fight for my values yet respect others, believe my deepest values right yet be ready to learn. I see that I shall be retracing this whole journey over and over--but, I hope, more wisely.

From William Perry. "Cognitive and Ethical Growth: The Making of Meaning." *The Modern American College: Responding to the New Realities of Diverse Students and a Changing Society*. Ed. Arthur Chickering. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981. 79.

Perry believes that while at least some cognitive and ethical development is likely for each student, not all students will develop to their position 9 potential--at least not during a particular educational experience. Instead of developing, he believes that some students will "escape" from the "pain" of learning and the "confusion" of "leaving the old self behind in order to find the 'new self'" (108). Perry therefore contends that "educators," who are largely responsible for developing students' potential, "need to acknowledge the pain and bitterness that happens when students feel the loss of the old self [and] the old way of knowing to make room for more

informed ways [of knowing]. Acknowledging their loss will lesson the apathy and despair that is often the result" (108). In this regard, Perry believes that "instructors can serve as a bridge from the old self to the new" (109).

Because Perry believes that learning is developmental and that individual students are in different positions of development, he concedes that educators should plan curricula in a developmental format. Teaching in a sequential, developmental fashion has also been embraced by art educators who contend that the ability to create art, perceive art, and understand art is a developmental process. For example, David Feldman argues that it is important for teachers "to understand how a novice becomes an expert and how to facilitate movement from the former to the latter" (245). He further explains that "knowledge is mastered in stages. It is not possible to move from novice to master without going through each of the intermediate stages" (246). Lowenfeld and Brittain explain that "aesthetic awareness may be taught, [but only] through an increase in a student's awareness of himself and a greater sensitivity to his own environment" (120). Perhaps more than that of any other

educator, Dewey's theory of art as experience encouraged the inclusion of art education in America's schools.

The essence of Dewey's educational theory is that we learn from experience, both everyday experience and, more to the point, "aesthetic experiences." He defines experience as a "thought," and any intelligible response to that thought as an "action" (11). Because Dewey believed that we bring knowledge learned from prior experiences with us to each new experience, as an art educator he was preoccupied with facilitating the interaction between "thought" and "action," thus maximizing what could be learned from personal experience.

For Dewey, the essence of art is not in the product or artifact but in the act of experiencing art through creation and perception. For this reason, Dewey was especially interested in the "aesthetic experience" one has when creating and perceiving works of art. Dewey views the aesthetic experience as a "funding" of past experiences that builds and constitutes a new experience, creating a synthesis of features. In this regard, experiences are sequential and developmental, with each new experience being a continuation of previous experiences. For these reasons, Dewey believes that all experiences should be an integral part of education.

Studying Perry's scheme enabled me to comprehend the assessments of teaching for artistic and aesthetic development according to Feldman, Lowenfeld, Brittain, and Dewey. Ultimately, I

decided to combine their theories with the Perry scheme in my research. The resulting weekly breakdown of the case study, as outlined in chapter 3, has as its foundation a sequential, developmental approach to teaching for artistic and aesthetic development.

2. 4. 2. Belenky et al.

In *Women's Ways of Knowing* Belenky et al. explain that they:

> became concerned about why women students speak so frequently of problems and gaps in their learning and so often doubt their intellectual competence. Indeed, we observed that women often feel alienated in academic settings and experience formal education as either peripheral or irrelevant to their central interest and development (4).

Building on Perry's scheme of cognitive and ethical development, these researchers grouped what they termed women's "perspectives," that may or may not be developmental, into the following five major epistemological categories: silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructed knowledge. Table 5 outlines the five perspectives.

TABLE 5

Belenky et al.'s five perspectives

Silence: "A position in which women experienced themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority" (15). Belenky et al. found that this epistemological position was rare, with only two or three women in this position at the time of the interview. Characteristics of this perspective include: • feeling deaf and dumb (24), • difficulty establishing the most basic connection with others (24), • obeying wordless authorities (27), • maintaining the women's place (29), • believing they should be seen but not heard (32).
Received Knowledge: "A perspective from which women conceived of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge of their own" (15); a position, according to the authors, "held most often by traditional-aged college students or women who relied on some form of public assistance" (43). Characteristics of this perspective include: • listening as a way of knowing (36), • listening to friends (37), • listening to authorities (39), and • trying hard to live up to the images that others have held up to them (49).
Subjective Knowledge: "A perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited" (15). Almost half of the women interviewed by Belenky et al. were "predominantly subjective in their thinking," (55) making subjective knowing the most populated category. Characteristics of this perspective include: • becoming aware of the existence of inner resources for knowing and valuing (54), • become(ing) [one's] own authority (54), and, • a distrust [for] logical analysis, abstraction, and even language itself (71).

Continued on next page

Procedural Knowledge: "A position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge" (15). Characteristics of this perspective include:

- experiencing conflict between the absolutist dictates of the authorities and the women's own subjectivism (88),
- engaging in conscious, deliberate systematic analysis (93),
- speaking in measured tones" (93),
- perspective taking" (97), and
- believing that "truth lies hidden beneath the surface and must [be] ferret[ed] out" (94).

The researchers found that procedural knowers tended to take on the perspective of procedural knowing in either a "separate" (i.e., one who separates from other people and life situations when making meaning) or "connected" (i.e., one who connects with others or to the self when making meaning) fashion. According to the researchers, "Most of the women who leaned heavily toward separate knowing were attending or had recently graduated from a traditional, elite, liberal arts college" (104); the majority of separate knowers attended a women's college. Characteristics of separate knowers include:

- engaging in "critical thinking" (104),
- refuse[ing] to play the conventional female role (104),
- taking as impersonal a stance as possible toward the object (109).

Characteristics of connected knowers include:

- refusing to judge (116),
- possessing the "capacity for empathy" (113),
- adhering to "the subjectivists' conviction that the most trustworthy knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the pronouncements of authorities" (112-113).

Constructed Knowledge: "A position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creator of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing" (15). Characteristics of this perspective include:

- the process of sorting out the pieces of the self and . . . searching for a unique and authentic voice" (137),
- requiring experts to "qualify themselves" (139), and
- feeling that "becoming and staying aware of the workings of their minds [is] vital to constructivist . . . well-being (141).

From Belenky et al. *Women's Ways of Knowing.* New York: Basic, 1986.

While William Perry's research informants were traditional-aged college students (mostly men), Belenky et al.'s study of 135 women included "recent alumnae of or currently enrolled students in formal educational settings as well as . . . [women

involved as providers and recipients of] human development service agencies supporting women in parenting their children" (11-12). Despite the fact that not all of Belenky et al.'s informants were college students, the authors provide suggestions for teaching to adult learners, women as well as men, using a model they call *connected teaching*. Belenky et al. define connected teaching as "a model . . . in which the expert . . . examines the needs and capacities of the learner . . . and composes a message that is . . . 'courteous' to the learner" (194). That is, while the expert understands that she knows more than the learner, she does not think herself any better. Instead of exerting power, she helps the learner on his or her own terms, as she would want an expert to do for her.

As is the goal of adult education in general, the aim of connected teaching--which the researchers propose meets the needs of both men and women learners--should be to support learners on their developmental journey. To do this, like Taylor, Belenky et al. suggest a structured environment that simultaneously allows for a degree of movement and freedom, with assigned tasks or study-session schedules.

When designing a course using the connected teaching model, Belenky et al. suggest that the teacher share imperfect or in-process thinking to provide students with a glimpse of the trajectory of more informed ideas. As the authors stress, "We think [connected teaching] might occur sooner if those of us who teach could find the courage . . . to think out loud with our students" (216). In

summarizing their idea of connected teaching, the authors define a connected classroom this way:

> The connected classroom recognizes the core of truth in the subjectivist view that each of us has a unique perspective that is in some sense irrefutably "right" by virtue of its existence. But the connected class transforms these private truths into "objects" publicly available to the members of the class who, through "stretching and sharing," add to themselves as knowers by absorbing in their own fashion their classmates' ideas. (223)

While the Perry scheme provided the impetus for teaching for aesthetic development using a sequential, developmental approach, Belenky et al.'s theory of teaching for connected knowing encouraged my role as participant-observer, a role that allowed me to share my own "stretching and sharing" with study participants.

2. 4. 3. Robert Kegan

Like William Perry and Belenky et al., Robert Kegan combines his theory of development with suggestions for instructing adult learners. Kegan, who included infants and young children in his study, believes that development happens in five stages, or to use his term *orders of consciousness,* with each stage a progression of, and including all of the characteristics of, the previous stage.

The first order of consciousness, which Kegan calls the "Incorporative Self" is associated with infancy and early childhood (*The Evolving Self* 113). The second order of consciousness Kegan calls the "Impulsive Self" and is associated with childhood and early adolescence (133). Next is the third order, associated with late adolescence and young adults, which Kegan calls the "Imperial Self"

(161). The fourth order, the "Interpersonal Self" (184), and the fifth order, the "Institutional Self" (221), are not age related, although Kegan found only adults capable of this advanced level of development. Together, Kegan refers to these orders of consciousness as "The Evolving Self."

In his seminal work of the same name, Kegan maintains that the three primary functions necessary for development to take place are confirmation, contradiction, and continuity. Kegan explains:

> We can distinguish three primary functions [for development to take place]: it must hold securely (confirmation and recognition); it must let go in a timely fashion (assist in differentiation, contradiction); and it must remain for recovery during that delicate period when the [person] is leaving behind what seems still like itself and which must [be] recover[ed] as part of its new organization [continuity]. (158)

Kegan defines *continuity* as "the provision of a bridge from the old . . . to the new" (159). Kegan asserts that for development of any kind to take place, "the conditions of confirmation and contradiction which promote growth must be present at least to some extent in almost any situation" (123). That is, for development to happen whether in a social or epistemological domain, what one knows must on the one hand be held firm (e.g., anticipating going away to college), while on the other hand being thwarted (e.g., realizing the loss of childhood). When this contradiction of meaning is sorted out, a deeper understanding is the result, thus establishing continuity of the original position (e.g., coming to terms with a more adult role).

Finally, Kegan believes that any educational goal "can only be accomplished if students come to feel that they are not required to leave their old loyalties at the door of the school but can bring them

in and have them respected" (*In Over Our Heads* 281). That is, goals can be accomplished when students are respected not for what they may become but for what they already are.

At the core of the preceding theories by Perry, Belenky et al., and Kegan, is the fundamental obligation to support adult learners as they embark on a developmental journey and to encourage students to reflect on meanings made from personal experience, to develop critical thinking skills, and to become self-directed learners. In short, our role as teachers is to assist adult learners with constructing their own meaning as they develop their learning and cognitive potential.

2. 5. Summary

Reading the literature outlined in this chapter familiarized me with educational research that could suggest teaching methods appropriate for teaching for the aesthetic experience. The case study's methodology is the subject of the next chapter.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the methodology of my research. Section 3. 1. explains the process used to solicit study participants, provides pertinent biographical data of study participants, and describes the rationale and format for the pre-study interview. Section 3. 2. explains the significance of each session as it relates to the Perry Scheme, and section 3. 3. explains the study in brief. Sections 3. 4. to 3. 7. chronicle the research methodology used for data collection and analysis. Section 3. 8. summarizes the chapter.

3. 1. Method for Soliciting Study Participants

I began soliciting study participants by calling an acquaintance who is an art teacher in a school district of approximately fifteen art teachers and asked her if I could speak about the study during the next scheduled meeting of art teachers. She agreed, and because the meeting was just two days away, I met with this group almost instantly. I introduced myself to the group, distributed the Study Outline (Appendix A), and verbally explained the study, and the pre-study and post-study interview requirement (for a description of the pre-study interview, see section 3. 1. 1., for a description of the post-study interview, see section 3. 7.).

While many in the group of twelve female and three male art educators appeared to nod in support of the study, only one teacher

(Sally[3]) expressed interest in participating. She gave me her phone number, and later the same day we scheduled a pre-study interview that took place in her classroom the following week. The interview lasted for about fifty minutes (see Appendix B for the Pre-study interview Protocol). As I left the interview, however, I felt daunted by the number of meetings I would need to attend to find another five or six potential study participants. I asked myself how I could accelerate the process.

Within a few days of my meeting with Sally, I received an invitation to an art-related event. On the invitation was a list of distinguished persons who would be in attendance, among them the art supervisor for a large, urban school district located approximately 20 miles from my home. I decided to call her to see if she might recommend any women art educators for participation in the study. She enthusiastically supported the idea of the study, and because the school district she worked in employed seventy-three women art educators for the K-12 level, I felt that she would be enormously helpful. As an added incentive, she offered to let the women art educators from her district earn professional development points for their participation in the study. She invited me to meet her in her office and instructed me to bring: (1) a one-page descriptive letter about the study (Appendix C); and (2) self-addressed stamped postcards with space allocated for interested parties to fill in their own addresses. During our meeting, she attached a supportive cover

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[3] All names are fictitious to protect the identity of participants.

letter to mine, placed the papers along with the postcards in individual envelopes, and mailed them through the school district's internal mail service.

Within days, I received eight postcards in the mail, all from women who taught at the elementary level. I telephoned each interested party and explained the study in more detail. Of the eight who returned cards, four women (Molly, Yvette, Isabel, and Jane) ultimately decided that they would be able to participate. One of these women suggested I contact a friend of hers who taught art in an elementary school in a local, suburban school district. I did, and she (Abigail) became the sixth participant in the study.

While I had originally intended to meet each participant at her school, personal schedules and estimated driving times prevented this from happening. As a result, I met the first woman from this group at her school during her planning period, the second at a cafe that was located near the entrance of a natural food store, the third in a college art gallery, the fourth at a pizza restaurant, and the fifth at a food court in a suburban shopping mall. All of these locations seemed comfortable enough, and the conversations lasted roughly forty-five minutes each. Table 6 on the next page notes pertinent biographical data of the study participants.

Table 6

Biographical Data of Study Participants

	Age (years)	Number of years teaching art	Grades currently teaching	Highest degree earned
Sally Caucasian, Native Born American (N.B.A.)	38	5	9-12	MSAE
Molly Caucasian (N.B.A.)	48	2 (taught reading for 20 years)	K-5	MSEd + 45 credits
Yvette Caucasian (N.B.A.)	49	4 (assisted 5)	K-5	BA Sociology Art Teacher Certification
Isabel Hispanic (N.B.A.)	32	6	K-5	MSEd
Jane Caucasian (N.B.A.)[4]	50	13	K-5	CAGS Candidate
Abigail Caucasian, Born and raised in Iceland	46	5	K-6	MSAE

MSAE = Master of Science in Art Education.
MSEd = Master of Science in Education.
CAGS = Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies.

[4] Jane's first husband was African-American. In her pre-study interview, she described her two children from this marriage as "mixed-race," and acknowledged that "they clearly go through struggles with racial identity."

3. 1. 1. The Pre-study Interview

The goal of my pre-study interview was to record how the women understood the aesthetic experience before the study began. This record would assist participants in determining what effect, if any, participating in the study had on their aesthetic understanding, because at the study's conclusion they could compare their responses from the interview with study transcripts and other data collected during the study (see section 3. 4., [Participant Responsibilities]). Conducting a pre-study interview as well acknowledged Kegan's advice that educational goals are best accomplished when students [participants] are respected not for what they may become, but for what they already are.

When I called each participant to explain the study in more detail, I explained the purpose of the pre-study interview. Specifically, I asked if the women could name two recent aesthetic experiences they had with a work of art, and, to assist us in our interview, if they could supply a reproduction of each work. All participants were able to name two aesthetic experiences, and most were able to provide reproductions of the artworks. In the few cases where the woman could not provide a reproduction of the artwork, I was able to do so. All reproductions of artworks were brought to the pre-study interview, whether by myself or the participant, to assist with visual clarity.

Each pre-study interview was conducted privately so that I could acquaint myself with participants on a one-to-one basis. As I

had never met any of the potential participants, spending time one-on-one seemed particularly important. I brought a copy of the study outline to all interviews to help me explain the study in greater detail. The private interview provided each woman with an opportunity to ask questions, in a confidential setting, about her role as a study participant. I made it clear during the interview that I would ask each participant to restate aloud the answers to the pre-study protocol during the first study session, and that as participant-observer, I would also provide answers to these questions. I also explained that at any time during the study, saying "pass" would move the conversation along to the next participant.

The pre-study interview was divided into four parts. In the first part, I asked participants to describe their aesthetic experience with one of the two works of art. Using probes (i.e., follow-up questions), I asked participants to describe their experience in as much detail as possible. After soliciting participants input, I explained that in the formal study we would examine the perceptual, cognitive, imaginative, emotional, and discovery components of several works of art. I then asked participants if they could describe the work we were discussing in the pre-study interview using any of those mediators.

In the second part of the interview, I asked participants to describe their experience with the second work of art, using the same questions and probes as before. I then asked participants what, if anything, this work of art had in common with the first work

they described. Comparing the two works of art provided participants with insight (confirmation) to their preferences, as the images offered many opportunities for comparison.

In the third part of the interview, I asked participants to name a work of art or artist whose work they did not like (contradiction) and to explain why they did not like it. Comparing this answer with answers to parts one and two of the interview enabled participants to consider their aesthetic comfort zone, that is, the style of art they were most likely to be attracted to and the style they were most likely to recoil from.

In the fourth part of the interview, I asked participants about the styles of art they were most likely to show to their students and about those they were likely to exclude from their curriculum. The purpose of these questions was to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on how their personal preferences might inform their teaching practice. Because the study sought to broaden currently held beliefs, thus informing participants' sensibilities as viewers, creators, and teachers, these questions seemed especially poignant.

I audio taped each interview, transcribed the tapes, and printed out two copies of each interview. I retained one copy for my records and for data analysis. I sent the other copy to the appropriate interviewee along with a study contract (Appendix D). The study began within weeks of the last interview. A detailed description of the study is presented in section 3. 2.

3. 2. The Study

In a period of 13 weeks, participants were required to study selected works of art, read scholarly discussions of these works as explained in section 1. 10. 2., and create three visual objects. In order to achieve my objectives for a sequential, developmental learning environment that respects personal experience and emphasizes a conversational format,--where dialogue, talk, and reflection are the foundations of learning,--I chose, from an exhaustive list of possibilities only nine works of art to view. By limiting course content in this way, I sought to allow participants the time needed for careful analysis and reflection, as recommended by Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson and Perkins. It has also been my experience that examining a few works in depth is a more effective approach to learning than trying to study many examples within a limited time frame. Likewise, I assigned only three art projects in an effort to give participants sufficient opportunity to focus and reflect on the works they created.

The initial work of art we studied, Herakles with Club and Lion Skin (A.D. 120-170, marble; based on 5th century B.C. Greek prototype), represents a dualistic (i.e., relying on authorities for knowledge, position 1) interpretation, as its strict adherence to the mathematical proportions of the human body meets the clear specifications for "art" dictated by the Greek philosopher Plato. The study concluded with a more constructed approach (i.e., relying on the self for knowledge, position 9), using Faith Ringgold's The French

Collection Part 1: #1, (1991, acrylic on canvas; pieced fabric border). The unconventional materials that Ringgold chose for this piece require that we reflect on our perceptions of what distinguishes "high art" from "low art" or "craft."

The making of our own art followed the same progression: The first artwork (created during session three) was a perfectly sculpted hand that represents Greek dualism in its imitation of natural proportions. The hand was "personalized" during session eight to demonstrate our transgression to relativism (position five of Perry's scheme). In session seven we created, as a group, a sandpainting in the Navajo style. Finally, in the last session, we brought in a work of art created to commemorate or describe a favorite thing our hand does. This task required that we construct personal meaning with ourselves, as did the final writing assignment, which asked, "What effect, if any, did conversation have on my aesthetic understanding?" (Reproductions of artworks created by participants can be found in Appendix E.)

With the exception of the first, eighth, and last session, for each session participants were asked to read several essays about the work we would view or create in that session and to record their responses to the readings in journals and weekly study worksheets (An explanation of the reading materials can be found in Appendix A, a copy of the weekly worksheet can be found in Appendix F). To assist with visual clarity, I scanned a reproduction of each work of art we would study. This way, participants could compare the

readings to a reproduction of the work of art before each session. Most readings supplied perceptual and cognitive information. As was true of my own experience, I expected this information to inform participants' imaginative, emotional, and discovery responses to each work of art. To encourage this result, I asked participants to record their imaginative, emotional, and discovery responses to a work, as well as their perceptual and cognitive responses, on the weekly study worksheet. Other readings provided information about the creative process undertaken by the artist; essays on art criticism also encouraged evaluation. Viewing, creating, and evaluating the significance of each experience provided participants with the aesthetic tools mentioned in section 1. 11.

Session One: Introductions.

I briefly repeated the purpose of the study by explaining the meaning of the research question. Next, I re-distributed the study outline, the scanned reproductions, and the reading materials, all of which were collected in a three-ring binder. Using their pre-study interview transcripts as a guide, each participant introduced herself to the group through the works of art she discussed in the initial interview. I posed each question from the pre-study interview protocol to the group, and, taking turns, each participant responded; then we continued on to the next question.

Greek and Roman Art: The Importance of Man

Session Two (MFA). Art Object: Herakles with Club and Lion Skin. Dualism; Position 1 in the Perry scheme (i.e., Authorities know, and if we work hard, read every word, and learn Right answers, all will be well (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 79). For a summary table of Perry's Scheme of Cognitive and Ethical Growth, see chapter 2, page 77.

Studying the statue of Herakles with Club and Lion Skin enlightened participants about the origins of artistic canons, as prescribed by the Greek philosopher Plato. Authorities such as Plato knew what a work of art should look like (i. e., an imitation of the proportions found in nature). If an artist such as the sculptor who chiseled the Herakles with Club and Lion Skin worked hard at his craft, and followed the canon, his work would be admired by his fellow Greek citizens. Casting their hands in session three enabled participants to create an example of "art," as defined by Plato, for themselves.

Session Three (Mass. Art). Art Project: Create a Sculpture of your Hand.

Dualism continued. We casted our hands using Insta-Mold, an instant mold-making compound (manufactured by Activa Products, Marshall, Texas). We each poured the Insta-Mold into a plastic bowl, inserted our hand, and somewhere between five to ten minutes, when the compound was firm, removed our hand from the flexible

mold. We then mixed plaster and poured it into the mold. When the plaster set up, we removed the mold from the bowl, cut away at the mold with a knife, and dislodged the plaster hand from the mold. The plaster hands were exact duplicates of our real hands and fulfilled Plato's definition of "art" because they demonstrated an imitation of "natural proportions" (see Appendix E for examples of the sculptures).

Session Four (MFA). Art Object: Statuette of a Shepherd Carrying a Sheep

Position 1 transition to Position 3 in the Perry scheme. In transition from Position 1 to Position 2, the student recognizes that "Some of our own Authorities disagree with each other or don't seem to know, and some give us problems instead of Answers" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 79). In accordance with Perry's transition from Position 2 to Position 3 the student recognizes that "even Good Authorities admit they don't know all the answers yet" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 79).

In the galleries of the MFA, the Greek statue of Herakles with Club and Lion Skin is located near the Early Christian Statuette of a Shepherd Carrying a Sheep. By walking between the two galleries, participants were able to study one statue in context with the other, and compare and juxtapose relationships between them. Similarly, the content of the reading materials assigned for each session allowed for comparisons and juxtapositions between the two cultures in which the statues were created.

Chinese Art: The Importance of Nature

Session Five (MFA). Art Object: Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain.

Position 3 in the Perry scheme. Some uncertainties and different opinions are real and legitimate *temporarily*, even for Authorities. They're working on them to get to the truth (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 79).

Whereas man was the primary subject in Greek and early Christian art, Nature was the primary subject in Chinese art, with man's role clearly subordinate to Nature's awesome and brutal strength. "Different opinions" as to what was important to portray and what was the appropriate method for portrayal in Chinese art contradicts the canons of Greek and early Christian art.

Studying the painting Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain, the Greek statue of Herakles with Club and Lion Skin, and the Early Christian Statuette of Shepherd Carrying a Sheep introduced participants to three cultures who had in common a strong philosophy for how works of art should look in order to meet standards of perfection. Comparing these *opinions* was the focus of conversation for this session. Similarly, comparing opinions of what constitutes an *art object* with examples from the Dan and Navajo cultures was the basis for comparison in the next two sessions.

African and Native American Art: A different Aesthetic and the Issue of Permanence

The African Dan and the Native American Navajos are concerned with neither the permanence of an object nor with imitating the laws of nature, but rather with the spirituality that an object possesses. For these cultures, the object does not simply *symbolize* the spiritual (as it does in Ancient Chinese and early Christian art), rather the object *contains* the spirit when it is in use for ceremonial functions. This notion raises several questions: Can an object be considered "art" If it is not created to be permanent? if its function is other than decorative or symbolic? If it is used in conjunction with other cultural practices? Finally, by asking these questions, do we communicate a Western bias of what art should be?

Session Six (MFA). Art Object: Mask (Deangle)

Positions 4A (multiplicity) and 4B (relativism subordinate) on the Perry scheme. Position 4A involves "diversity and uncertainty coordinating with the known. . . . 'Where Authorities do not know the Answer, any opinion is as good as any other'" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 84). In Position 4B, the student understands that there are comparative ways of thinking, which "forces a comparison of patterns of thought--that is, a thinking about thinking" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 87).

Studying the Deangle, which was made from carved wood and shells, provided participants with the opportunity to juxtapose the use of non-permanent materials with the permanent art materials

used by artists in the cultures we studied previously. These considerations of "relative opinions" and "comparative ways of thinking" continued in session seven, when, as a group, we created a Navajo style sandpainting.

Session Seven (Mass. Art). Art Object: Father Sun, Mother Earth Transition to Position 5 (relativism) in Perry's scheme. Generally speaking, there are multiple ways of seeing and interpreting what is seen. Those in this position, according to Perry, realize that "even the most careful analytical thought and logical reasoning will not, in many areas vital to their lives, restore the hope of ultimate rightness and certainty promised by Authority in the Eden they left behind" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 90). However, Perry concedes, "relativism is inescapable and forms the epistemological context of all further developments" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 88).

Because Navaho sandpaintings are considered sacred objects inappropriate for public display, and are unavailable due to non-permanence, we made our own sandpainting as a group using colored sand. We proceeded according to Congdon-Martin's explanation of the creative process of sandpainting. (See Appendix A for Congdon-Martin's explanation of the creative process, and Appendix E for a reproduction of the sandpainting made during session seven).

In creating a sandpainting in the Navajo style as a group

project, we simultaneously created an example of a "connected classroom" as each participant voiced her perspective on how to proceed with the painting, or "multiple ways of seeing and interpreting what is seen." A collaborative effort such as this was essential in establishing trust and respect for one another as learners and artists.

Session Eight (Mass. Art). Art project: Personalize the plaster hand so that it "says" something about you.

Position 5 (relativism in Perry's scheme). Position 5 holds that students will be able to "transfer the more advanced pattern of thought learned in one area to areas in which they have been thinking more simplistically" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 89). Students may be able to explore alternative perspectives in many disciplines and areas of life. The realization that there is no absolute truth can cause anger and confusion, which can result in "temporizing" (waiting for an event to happen in hopes that it will show itself to be the right way to go); "retreating" back to Position 2; or "escaping" (where the student loses the commitment to grow and learn [*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 89-91]).

In more positive cases, students experience in themselves the original meaning, which they had previously expected to come from outside (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 92). By asking participants to "personalize" their plaster hands, I hoped they would transfer the more advanced patterns of thought we learned by studying art from

other cultures into an area where they had previously thought simplistically (i.e., the making of a simple plaster hand).

For example, I wanted to describe the juggling that I have to do in my life as a student, mother, artist, and teacher. To represent the many uses of my hands, I mixed the yellow, red, and black pigments that I use for papermaking until I created a tone that matched my skin color. I added water and soaked the plaster hand in the solution until the hand turned the same color as my own. Next, I let the hand dry. Then I submerged the hand, as far as the base of the fingernails, in greenish papermaking pigment to represent the color my nails often are due to the constant "bleeding" of the green color into the paper pulp. After I let the hand dry, I filled it with miniature objects representing all that my hand is used for: cooking, painting, writing, attending to children, and eating (see Appendix E for reproductions of the personalized hands created by participants).

A Return to Western Aesthetics

Session Nine (Mass. Art). Art Object: The Last Supper

Position 6 in the Perry scheme ("I see I'm going to have to make my own decisions in an uncertain world with no one telling me I'm Right" [*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 79]). Students experience intrinsic growth, something to believe in, a commitment to ideas, and a sense of responsibility. They view themselves as the core for growth. There is a willingness to take charge and make things happen. This position also foresees a narrowing of potential ways of

believing, commitments and choices. "There are potentials and alternatives to discard" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 92).

Through studying The Last Supper, I hoped participants would come to recognize Da Vinci as a person who was "committed to ideas," one who saw himself as "the core for growth" and development-- a mindset that participants should have embraced by this point in the study. Da Vinci is the first Western artist we studied who views his artistic ability as "privileged," an attribute not bestowed on artists by the philosophers who dictated artistic canons.

Session Ten (MFA). Art Object: The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris

Position 7 in the Perry scale. Initial commitments begin to form to "a set of moral values, another person, a job, an ideal. . . . [A] sense of "claiming" [an identity] is vivid" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 94).

Examined through the lens of late twentieth century post-modernism, it is clear that the images Rubens used to symbolize goodness and evil have encouraged our Western bias for seeing light (white) as pure, innocent, and beautiful, and dark (black) as being brutal and violent. Studying the painting The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris encouraged participants to reflect on their own "set of morals" and how these morals affect us and those we come in contact with. This self-assessment is important as we move to the latter stages of the developmental scheme where, while we must

attempt to hold onto our beliefs, we must also consider the beliefs of others.

Examples of Expression and Intuition in Twentieth Century Art

Session Eleven (Mass. Art). Art Object: Guernica

Positions 8 and 9 in the Perry scheme. "Establish priorities among commitments with respect to energy, action, and time. These orderings, which are often painful to make, can lead to periodic experiences of serenity and well-being in the midst of complexity" (*Cognitive and Ethical Growth* 95).

Picasso, who was committed to abolishing Fascism from his native Spain, used his own "intuition" to express his intention (instead of relying on images found in nature). He asks the viewer to bring his or her own experience to this complex work. In this session, participants were moving toward relying on their own interpretations of a work of art and were beginning to consider their final essay, which would examine the level of aesthetic understanding they gained by participating in this study.

Session Twelve (Mass. Art).

Art Object: The French Collection Part I: # 1

Positions 8 and 9 (continued).

Ringgold's use of simplistic composition, the quilting medium traditionally associated with women, the inclusion of her personal history (in this case, an extensive study of the famous "masterpieces" when she was an art student), and the addition of text to the surface

of the work depart from the traditional conceptions of what makes an object "art." In the process, Ringgold creates her own meaning, just as participants had been asked to do in their last art project and in their final papers.

Session Thirteen (Mass. Art). Art project: Make a work of art of the most precious thing/s your hand does (position 8 and 9 continued). For this last project, we, like Ringgold created our own meaning. There was no prescription for what this "work of art" had to be, what it would function as, what materials would be used, or how permanent it would be. The only criteria was that the participant, as artist and creator, examine her own experience and bring those experiences to the object. This assignment served as the visual complement to the final paper, "What effect, if any, did participating in this study have on your aesthetic understanding?" (See Appendix E for reproductions of the artworks created by participants).

3. 2. 1. Summary

The Perry scheme, as outlined above, was read to participants at the beginning of each session to provide them with a rationale for what we were reading, studying, and viewing. Participants were welcome to read the Perry scheme for themselves, and to comment on Perry's theory in the context of their own thinking, or on how Perry's scheme connected with what we were studying. Section 3. 3.

describes the weekly breakdown of the study.

3. 3. The Study: The Course in Brief

The question, "What effect, if any, does conversation have on the aesthetic understanding of six women art educators?" was addressed through the qualitative case study addressed in section 3. 2.

The study lasted thirteen weeks, approximately one semester. Most sessions took place at the MFA in front of that particular week's object of contemplation. I chose the museum environment for three reasons:

1. I believe in viewing an original work of art whenever possible because it reveals, through the surface quality, the marks left by the creator. This allows for deeper communication with the object. All participants, in their pre-study interview, mentioned that viewing the original was an important aspect of their aesthetic experience.
2. Like Czikszentmihalyi and Robinson, I believe that "the large, simple environment of the art museum, free of outside disturbances, limits competing information and embodies the initial condition of freedom from distraction" (142).
3. Also like Czikszentmihalyi and Robinson, I believe that "looking at one object in context with others can be a great learning experience, as juxtapositions and relationships to other

works of that period, culture, other artists, or art made during different times in the same artist's career often happen" (146).

We met in a closed conference room at the Massachusetts College of Art if the object of interest was not available locally. For session eleven, I provided each participant with a black and white photocopy of the reproduction of Picasso's Guernica, and for sessions nine and twelve, a color copy of Da Vinci's The Last Supper and Ringgold's The French Collection Part 1: #1, respectively.

The study began in January 1998. At the first meeting, participants introduced themselves through the artworks they discussed in the initial interview; that is, they spoke publicly of their aesthetic experience with these objects. This meeting was supportive of the women's current level of aesthetic knowing, and at the same time encouraged reflection on the other participants' experience. Conversational teaching methods, as outlined in chapter 2, were used for this and all study sessions.

Art Viewing Sessions

After meeting in the Lobby of the MFA or in the conference room at Mass. Art, we walked as a group to the work of art or spent time examining the photocopy of the object. After several moments in either case, the sessions opened with participants reviewing their journal entries (response to the readings). Taking turns, each participant read aloud a significant journal entry, which might have

been a verbatim quote from a reading, a reflection, or an idea that she wanted to articulate--all participants were encouraged to choose what they deemed to be most important. After each participant had spoken, we decided as a group which topics seemed most suitable for further discussion.

After an hour of discussion, we took a fifteen-minute break. This break was needed to prompt what Perkins calls "reflective intelligence," where studying an object for a long time invites inquiry, and so too does "looking away" which "helps to refresh your eye" and ignite new questions (*The Intelligent Eye* 42).

Upon returning from the break, we resumed the conversation by reading responses from our weekly study worksheets, specifically our perceptual, cognitive, imaginative, emotional, and discovery responses to the work of art, as well as our creative and evaluative comments. If time permitted, we wrote in our journals, using the list and free-writing styles suggested by Phyllis Walden, significant thoughts that were discussed during the session, then we adjourned.

Art-Making/Critique Sessions

During the third session, we created a plaster hand that imitated our own hand. During the seventh session, we created in the tradition of Navaho sandpainting, a sandpainting of our own. In session eight, we conversed about the plaster hands that we had since "personalized." The last two exercises were particularly important for these sessions, as they marked the end of our venturing into non-Western cultures

and encouraged us to bring aspects of the journey back with us as we revisited a more Western perspective during the final sessions. Specifically, in the final sessions, we contemplated permanent versus non-permanent objects and individual expression versus universal meaning. At the last session, we reviewed our original artwork, which signified something important or precious done by our hands.

3. 4. Participant Responsibilities

Participants had six major responsibilities:

(1) reading the assigned materials (readings were collected in a three-ring binder);

(2) keeping a double-entry journal: the left side of the page recorded what for the participant constituted significant information gleaned from each reading, and the right side of the page was reserved for responding to these entries in a reflective manner (e.g., what the information meant to the participant and how it affected her aesthetic understanding);

(3) responding in writing to the weekly study worksheet;

(4) conversing with the group about journal and worksheet entries;

(5) creating three works of art--the plaster hand that was "personalized" so that it said something unique about the participant, the group sandpainting, and a work of art made outside of the sessions that reflected an important thing done by the participant's hand; and

(6) writing a final paper on how participation in the study informed the participant's aesthetic understanding.

As touchstones for this paper, participants consulted their journal entries, notes from the readings, responses made in the weekly study worksheets, personal and group transcripts, reflections about artwork studied, exercises completed in the final paper road map (see section 3. 5.), and the artworks made in and out of the sessions.

As participant-observer, I participated in all of these activities and completed all requirements except the final paper. Because the research question focused on the participants, I did not consider my efforts in the data analysis.

Finally, participants were required to take part in a post-study interview that I conducted one year after the study began. Between the pre-study interview and the post-study interview, I collected and analyzed the data mentioned below in section 3. 5. For an explanation of the post-study interview, see section 3. 7.

3. 5. Method for Data Collection

Data collected included:

- Transcripts from the pre-study interview (78 pages, single spaced) and the post-study interview (12 pages, single spaced),
- Study session transcripts (187 pages, single spaced);
- Artwork made during the study and the artwork each women brought to the last session;

- The three- to five-page final paper, and, in some cases, exercises from the final paper road maps, explaining how, if at all, the study influenced the participants' aesthetic understanding (48 pages, single and double spaced).

I recorded each session on audio tape; after each meeting I transcribed the tapes. I provided a copy of the transcript to participants at the following session. I asked participants to read the transcript carefully during the week and cross out with black marker any information they wanted omitted from the record. Providing participants with the transcripts encouraged them to reflect on their own words and to prepare to answer the research question in the final paper.

To assist participants in the writing of their final papers, I supplied them with the following materials: personal weekly transcripts (I cut and pasted individual comments from the complete, participant-reviewed transcript and made two copies of each, one for my own records and one for the participant); a copy of the category chart (see Appendix G and section 3. 6. for an explanation of the category chart); and the final paper road map (Appendix H), which contained two exercises that helped identify any changes in thinking that may have occurred as participants progressed through the study. The road map design was based on Kegan's theory that confirmation plus contradiction equals continuity.

The first road map exercise required that participants read all their transcripts, color-code categories of response according to the

category chart, and record any changes in response within each category. Changes included any departure from original thinking or a stronger or weaker support for an idea. If the participant did not notice any changes, she was instructed to write "no change."

The second road map exercise required that participants consider, for each category highlighted in the first exercise, any affirmations that may have occurred, how changes may have contradicted original thinking, and how--when considered together--both may have led to deeper aesthetic understanding. These changes were interpreted as the "effect" the study had on each participant.

3. 6. Method for Data Analysis

All data mentioned in section 3. 3. 2. was analyzed by me to assist me in answering the study question "What effect, if any, does conversation have on the aesthetic understanding of six women art educators?" To guide me in the process, I adhered to Patton's recommendations for proceeding with data analysis and respected his distinction between "description" (findings) and "interpretation" (explanation of findings):

> The first task in qualitative analysis is description. The descriptive analysis answers basic questions. . . . Description must be carefully separated from interpretation. Interpretation involves explaining the findings, answering 'why' questions, attaching significance to particular results, and putting patterns into an analytic framework. . . . Focus in analyzing qualitative data comes from the evaluation research questions generated at the very beginning of the inquiry process, during the conceptual, question-focusing phase of the study. (374-375)

The Task of Description: Coding and Categorizing the Transcripts

Using colored pens, pencils, and markers, I color-coded the pre-study interview transcripts and study session transcripts looking for regularities, or patterns of thought that, according to Patton, could be placed into categories. Patton suggests judging the merit of a category by two criteria:

> The first criterion concerns the extent to which the data that belong in a certain category hold together . . . in a meaningful way. The second criterion concerns the extent to which differences among categories are bold and clear. . . . When several different classification systems have been developed, some priorities must be established to determine which category systems are more important than others. (403)

With Patton's advice in mind, I focused my attention on the categories that had the highest number of responses. I was most interested in how participants were responding to the components of aesthetic experience as I had identified them and to the creative and evaluative elements of the case study (the aesthetic tools). However, I did not censure or omit other categories, as I considered all data potentially important for my research. By the end of the study, I had identified 18 categories of response (see Category Chart, Appendix G). I was rewarded for my decision to retain all data when some of these categories, primarily category 10 (comments about teaching) proved incredibly valuable while interpreting the data analysis (see section 4. 10.) Using the same color-coding and categorizing system, I coded and categorized the final papers and, in some cases, comments from the final paper road maps.

I compared participants' statements from the final papers with their pre-study interview and study session transcripts to locate areas where changes in thinking first became evident. I also looked for data that re-affirmed statements made during the pre-study interview or during earlier sessions. Identifying these areas of the study allowed me to assess where transitions in thought might have occurred. The process of data analysis began in May and continued through January 1999. In February 1999, I met participants for the post-study interview.

3. 7. The Post-study Interview

Originally I had intended to use the same protocol for the pre-study and post-study interview. My intention was to compare the transcripts from the pre-study interview with those from the post-study interview to determine if there were any significant changes in each woman's description of her aesthetic experience.

As the study progressed, however, I realized that this tighter structure was not conducive to the direction the study was taking. That is, while I had determined the structure of the pre-study interview, study sessions, and participant responsibilities, I felt that allowing for a more open-ended post-study interview (where the women would be informed about and agree to the interview protocol), was more in keeping with the learning environment created during the study.

As a group, we decided that the protocol for the post-study interview would be to discuss how the study affected participants as viewers, teachers, artists, and in general. Agreeing to this more open-ended format made the task of data analysis more formidable for the researcher for I had to weigh the depth of meaning of comments made in the post-study interview with those made in the pre-study interview and throughout the study. Nevertheless, this open-ended format, and the input participants had in designing the post-study protocol, was in keeping with the direction the study had taken as participants gained a stronger voice and deeper understanding of the aesthetic experience.

The post-study interview, conducted approximately one year after the study began, was informed by Belenky et al.'s contention that,--for the women in their study at least,--the most salient learning experiences happened outside the academic setting, on the stage of real life. Because I expected that the knowledge participants' gained from the study would become relevant in real-life situations such as in the classroom, in the studio, and as viewers, I waited a year to evaluate whether the women would or could describe how the study had affected them as viewers, teachers, artists, and in general. (See Appendix I for the post-study interview protocol).

Unlike the pre-study interview, which was conducted privately, the post-study was conducted as a group interview, at the request of several participants. We met in the same conference room

at Massachusetts College of Art where our other discussions were held. To offset any bias in response due to group influence, I mailed each participant a copy of the post-study interview protocol and designated an area in which they were to record their responses. I also requested that participants not discuss responses with one another before our group meeting. Responses were read aloud to the group at the interview. Consistent with conversational teaching methods, some input from other participants was apparent (i.e., one participant might comment that hearing a response from another participant informed her original response). In such cases, I made several probes to original statements, but, because responses had been written before the start of the meeting, authentic responses were clearly defined.

If any new information appeared in the content of the women's responses during the post-study interview, I inquired as to what in the study, or what since the study, might have informed this new perspective. I audio taped the post-study interview, transcribed the tape, and sent a copy to all participants with the same invitation to change or delete information as they desired. I compared statements made during the post-study interview with statements from the final papers, pre-study interview, and study session transcripts to locate evidence of change, or re-affirmation of original thinking. The process of coding and categorizing the post-study interview and comparing it with all other data began in February 1999 and continued through September 1999.

The Task of Interpretation

Conducting the post-study interview marked completion of the data collection for the study. With this information, I was finally able to discern how participating in the study had affected participants' aesthetic understanding. The data findings and analysis as it relates to the question "What effect, if any, does conversation have on the aesthetic understanding of six women art educators" is the topic of discussion in chapter four.

The descriptive analysis (see sections 4. 1 to 4. 9.) documents any changes in, or re-affirmations, of each participant's aesthetic understanding as a result of participation in the study. The findings are organized according to the components of aesthetic experience as I defined them in chapter 1. The effect that art making and evaluation, as conducted during the study, had on each participant's aesthetic understanding is included with these findings. Interpretations of significant findings can be found in section 4. 10. Data was collected from the final papers, final paper road maps, and transcripts from the pre-study interview, study sessions, and post-study interview.

3. 8. Summary

The pre-study interview provided a record of how participants understood the aesthetic experience before the study began. My conception of the pre-study interview was informed by Robert Kegan's belief that students must be respected for who they are, not

just for what they might become. The pre-study and post-study interview protocols, which followed an open-ended format, were informed by the work of Belenky et al., Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, Parsons, and Housen. The general format for the class was modeled after William Perry's scheme of cognitive and ethical development. The conversational format, methods for keeping the journal, and final paper as self-assessment were informed, primarily, by bell hooks, Phyllis Walden and Kathleen Taylor.

By following an open-ended format in the pre-study interview, having participants answer the research question in their own words, and conducting the post-study interview to assess the effect of the study, I was assured, as a researcher, that I would learn as much as possible about how these participants were affected by the study. What I discovered during the course of this study is the topic of chapter four. How this analysis has informed my theory of the aesthetic experience and what I have learned about facilitating for the aesthetic experience, are the focus of chapter five.

4. DATA ANALYSIS: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

4. 1. Introduction

The data collected from the final papers and post-study interview are described and analyzed in this chapter. Where possible, this data is compared to comments made by participants during the pre-study interview or during the study sessions.

The words of the participants are powerful, clearly communicating an evolution of thought and varying degrees of aesthetic insight. Sections 4. 2. through 4. 6. address the perceptual, cognitive, imaginative, emotional, and discovery components, respectively. Section 4. 7. discusses the creative response in the aesthetic experience and section 4. 8. examines the role of evaluation. I summarize and interpret the findings in sections 4. 9. and 4. 10.

Description of Findings

4. 2. The Effect of Perceptual Inquiry on the Aesthetic Understanding of Study Participants

Sally, Isabel, and Jane made a total of four comments about perception in their final papers; I have placed these comments into two categories. Participants made no comments about perception during the post-study interview. See Table 7 on the next page for an overview of these comments.

Table 7

Perception in the Aesthetic Experience

Comments	Sally	Isabel	Jane	response rate	Text Discussion
Perception as an aid to improved verbal skills	X	X		50%	4. 2. 1.
Incorporating perceptual inquiry into the curriculum	X		X	50%	4. 2. 2.

4. 2. 1. Perception as an Aid to Improved Verbal Skills

In her final paper, Sally documents her deepened aesthetic understanding by recognizing the merits of perceptual inquiry. Early on, she writes:

> I found being interviewed about my aesthetic experiences and the required conversations during class [study sessions] to be extremely difficult, sometimes uncomfortable, and a foreign way for me to communicate. This discovery is a key factor in why I have usually avoided incorporating art history into my curriculum.

Sally acknowledges discomfort and unease when she is required to discuss her aesthetic experience; which suggests an initial reluctance, or inability, to articulate her process of perceptual exploration. She goes on to say that participating in the study allowed for "expansions of my perceptual . . . responses" and that, as a result of the study, "I have become more fluent and comfortable in verbally (original emphasis) dialoguing about my aesthetic experience."

Later in her paper, Sally reports that her increased comfort level in "verbally dialoguing about aesthetic experience" has enabled her to "feel more comfortable showing slides of artwork and guiding students through an aesthetic dialogue about the pieces." Sally provides us with an excellent example of these improved communication skills during session 8 as she comments enthusiastically on Peter Paul Rubens' painting The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris:

> The two most impressive parts . . . that I'm most intrigued with is number one, the skin tones. Something I'm working with right now in the portrait class that I'm taking. And the instructor talks about this green thing, and this blue thing. It's not just as simple as putting that green down. . . .
>
> One portrait I did a few weeks ago where the guy looks like a vampire. The skin looks dead. I couldn't get that lifelike quality on top of the green. So, um that's just something I'd want to study. I want to go up really close to that painting. I wish I could.
>
> The second part is the white gown, and I have a student right now who's doing a still life and I was just talking to her today about how much, how little white you would actually see because of all the shadows and how the impressionists and other painters used so many other colors and still were able to create the illusion of white without using just white. And saving pure white for the highlights. And that would be a great example to show her.

While Sally focuses her perceptual attention on Rubens' "impressive" use of color, in her final paper Isabel reprints excerpts from her pre-study interview to describe how engaging in the compositional elements of Salvador Dali's The Persistence of Memory brought her to a deeper understanding of the painting and has made her aware of the influence of her own pedagogy:

> [In my pre-study interview, I answered Meg's question "Can you describe any of the formal or perceptual characteristics of the piece?" by stating that] I enjoyed the organic shapes. He doesn't focus on geometric shapes. He uses organic or biomorphic shapes, and there is harmony, even though the placement of things is odd, but yet in some odd way, it makes perfect sense. There is so much harmony. After reading the answer [in my pre-study interview transcripts] I found myself questioning the influence of aesthetic perception. In order to describe the artwork, I based my description on my formal training of art (elements and principles). . . . without . . . knowledge of the arts, I can't make an intellectual description of the work of art.

Engaging in perceptual inquiry assisted Sally and Isabel in unlocking the creative process undertaken by the artist, thus deepening their understanding of the painting studied. Further, Sally uses Rubens' example as a springboard with which to compare her own efforts and explains how this, in turn, might assist with her students' creative endeavors.

4. 2. 2. Incorporating Perceptual Inquiry into the Curriculum

Jane--who consistently made strong perceptual comments throughout the study--also discovered the complementary aspects of viewing, creating, and teaching. In her final paper she explains:

> In all my perceptual commentaries I express a strong kinesthetic and visual response to my aesthetic experience. I express being drawn in, up, around, moving around, following an energy flow, responding to the power of a presence or a geometric structure underlying an image. This kinesthetic language surprises me; although I think of myself as a dancer in "constant movement," I . . . hear it [as well when I'm trying to understand] my connections to the world.

Jane continues:

> In our dialogues I found I questioned continually, as I do with my students, redirecting students' inquiries to seek their perceptions. This

> is my approach to my own art. I am always asking, What's needed? Where am I going with this? What is this saying? What is being asked for? What color? What tonality? What space? What weight or texture? What's the message here? Am I communicating?

As well as articulating the technical issues they face in their creative endeavors and the processes they engage in to resolve these issues, the preceding excerpts illustrate how Sally and Jane attempt to strengthen the artistic voices of their students by engaging them in a similar practice. That is, Sally attempts to focus her students' attention on the external stimuli of the "impressionists and other painters" for comparison and direction--a practice she engages in to strengthen her own creative endeavors. Likewise, Jane attempts to focus her students' attention on the internal stimuli of "their own perceptions" to answer creative questions--a practice she engages in with her own creations.

4. 2. 3. Summary

In these statements by participants, we find clear evidence suggesting that their aesthetic understanding deepened because they engaged in perceptual inquiry. Prolonged viewing of a single object allowed participants to thoroughly explore the object's perceptual qualities, thus facilitating discoveries about the technical devices used by the artist. Discussing perceptual responses allowed participants to reflect on their personal viewing practices, assess others' interpretations, and, occasionally transport this information

into their classrooms to strengthen their teaching practices. Table 8 provides an overview of this summary.

Table 8

Summary of Perceptual Responses

Sally	Credits perception as aiding her improved verbal skills, which in turn makes her feel more comfortable showing slides of art work to her students
Isabel	Credits perceptual inquiry with helping her understand the creative process undertaken by Dali.
Jane	Makes connections between viewing and creating which encourages a stronger aesthetic voice in the classroom.

For the women who commented on perceptual inquiry in their final papers, it seems that engaging in perceptual inquiry deepened their aesthetic understanding, much like I hypothesized it would in sections 1. 5. 1. and 1. 10. 1., with no study participants expressing conflict with this idea. As we shall see in the next section, however, the idea of cognition--in the form of information contained in the reading materials outlined in section 1. 10. 2.--as a factor for deepening aesthetic experience was not one with which all study participants were comfortable.

4. 3. The Effect of Cognitive Inquiry on the Aesthetic Understanding of Study Participants

As first mentioned in section 1. 10. 2., the cognitive component was introduced in the form of reading materials, which provided participants with pertinent information about each artwork we studied. While I considered cognition important because of its ability to assist the release of the imagination, study participants were more

concerned with the effect of cognition on the emotional response. In their pre-study interviews, Sally and Molly argue that emotion is separate from cognition in the aesthetic experience and that intellectualizing an aesthetic encounter has the potential to ruin the experience. After the study, both participants express the complete opposite point of view (Sally in her final paper and Molly in her post-study interview), noting instead that cognition buoys emotion in the aesthetic experience.

Like Sally, who adds information to her curriculum to deepen her students' aesthetic understanding, Isabel introduces information in her curriculum, acknowledging that "knowledge of art definitely enhances my aesthetic experience." However, in her final paper, Isabel maintains that cognition affects her otherwise "emotional state" ("I feel that the aesthetic experience occurs only momentarily and that cognition and intellect affect this experience the moment the work is perceived"). That is, while Isabel concedes that information is essential to understanding works of art, she believes that emotion, not cognition, is a component of the aesthetic experience. For Isabel, cognition works to explain the aesthetic experience *after* it has occurred.

During the pre-study interview, Jane and Abigail provide examples of sharing information with their students. Even so, in their final papers, both question the necessity of introducing information in their curricula, as they worry it may, in the words of Jane, "color" the authentic responses of their students.

Without a doubt, the staunchest opponent to considering information in her creative efforts and in her roles as viewer and teacher is Yvette. For her, information can only reinforce the academic hierarchy[5] that has plagued Western art for centuries--something that she believes has the potential to extinguish the creative torch of her students.

Twenty-two comments, which I have grouped into six categories, were made pertaining to cognition in the aesthetic experience. See Table 9 on the next page for a breakdown of these comments.

[5] The academic hierarchy to which Yvette refers has biased some when considering the relative merit or value of a particular work, style, or artist. Like a literary canon, it dictates what is most valuable historically.

Table 9

Cognition in the Aesthetic Experience

Comments	Sally	Molly	Yvette	Isabel	Jane	Abigail	Response rate	Text discussion
Separating emotion and cognition	X	X	X	X			18%	4. 3. 1. 4. 3. 2. 4. 3. 3.
Connecting emotion and cognition	X	X					9%	4. 3. 1.
Incorporating information in the curriculum	X	X		X	X	X	22%	4. 3. 2. 4. 3. 4.
Cognition in deepening aesthetic experience	X		X	X	X	X	22%	4. 3. 1. 4. 3. 2. 4. 3. 3.
Cognition as a benchmark for aesthetic conversation					X	X	9%	4. 3. 4.
Information as interfering with authentic response			XX		X	X	18%	4. 3. 5.

4. 3. 1. Connecting Emotion and Cognition in the Aesthetic Experience

Like Baumgarten who sought to understand aesthetic experience as separate from pure reason, in their pre-study interviews Sally and Molly consider the separation of emotion from cognition in aesthetic

experience. Sally, for example, believes that the public's love affair with impressionist painters comes from our not having to "think about it":

> I think . . . that's why so many people . . . enjoy impressionism . . . it's just more of a celebration of paint and joy and light and color as opposed to any kind of serious subject matter that you have to really think a lot about.

By contrast, in her final paper Sally writes:

> The contradictions I have observed in my aesthetic responses throughout this study are the expansions of my perceptual, intellectual, and emotional responses to pieces of art due to the readings. I found that I have become more fluent and comfortable in verbally dialoguing about my aesthetic experience. The readings increased my comfort level in understanding and appreciating the pieces. I did not expect to have the readings increase my ability to respond emotionally. I was amazed to find out how much they did. It has become so apparent to me that a viewer needs some information about the artist or the cultural context the piece was created in to even begin to appreciate the work. My emotional, intellectual, and perceptual responses were increased by at least fifty percent due to the readings. How sad that most viewers in the world will never have informed aesthetic experiences, nor even realize there is such a thing!

Reminiscent of Sally's pre-study comment, Molly balks at the idea of scrutinizing a work in her pre-study interview. When asked to describe any formal or perceptual characteristics of Michaelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco, the conversation proceeds thus:

> Molly: I think he mastered his own style without getting too technical. To be honest, I don't like to think too much about it. . . . it ruins the emotions for me.
>
> Meg: [Do] you mean thinking about the technical aspects and the more . . . rational ideas about the piece?
>
> Molly: Yeah, I don't like bringing that into the emotions.

Molly appears to have bridged the gap in the emotional/cognitive continuum. In her post-study interview, she describes a salient aesthetic experience she had at a local museum. In that case, possessing information about the exhibit contributed to her emotional encounter with the work.

> Molly: I went over this summer to see an exhibit at one of the Harvard museums. This is one instance where I can recall being impacted by the study. From the week we studied the African mask, well I just got a little emotional, and I found it a really wonderful experience to be there to extend that initial feeling and experience we had in the study.
>
> Meg: So, seeing the African work at the Harvard museum reminded you of our session with the Dan mask?
>
> Molly: Yes. And I just felt a deeper appreciation personally.
>
> Meg: How so?
>
> Molly: Because of the readings and the discussions we had. It gave me a deeper dimension and awareness while visiting there.

Understanding the symbol systems they were viewing allowed Sally and Molly, in the words of Goodman, to "read" the artworks of their contemplation at a more sophisticated level of understanding, thus engaging them more deeply in the aesthetic experience. Both participants acknowledge that content and contextual information deepened their appreciation of the artwork studied and heightened their emotional response. As we shall see in the next section, it is this discovery that acts as the impetus for incorporating information in the curriculum.

4. 3. 2. Incorporating Information in the Curriculum

Perhaps thinking of her Harvard museum experience, Molly embraces my approach to the curriculum. In her post-study interview she states:

> My students and myself will [benefit] from the experience that we've had. The study as a whole, the discussions we've had, the museum visits.

More specifically, Sally provides us with a general example of how "participating in this study" and reading information, in particular, has expanded her artistic vocabulary, thus providing her with the language skills she needs to incorporate "slides of artwork" in her curriculum. In her final paper she writes:

> I have already made significant changes in my teaching due to my participating in this study. I feel more confident showing slides of artwork and guiding students through an aesthetic dialogue about the pieces. I have even given them readings although it is still too early to tell how much of an effect this will have. . . . I want my students to learn what an aesthetic experience is and that the experience is different for every individual and that their own experience can be different for each piece. I would like to slowly work towards getting them to understand that their aesthetic experience can change and grow with some information about the piece.

As with her comments about Rubens' painting in section 4. 2., Sally demonstrates a willingness to incorporate into her curriculum information gleaned from the study, with the desired outcome of deepening the aesthetic understanding of her students, much like her own aesthetic capacity was expanded.

Including information in the curriculum occurred to Isabel as well, even though she continued to view cognition as separate from aesthetic experience. In her final paper Isabel writes:

> I went through various emotional states, but discovered that this state was followed by either perceptual response or intellectual response. . . . I discovered that I feel that the aesthetic experience occurs only momentarily and that cognition and intellect affect this experience the moment the work is perceived.

Isabel continues:

> This . . . made me question . . ., let's say, a child or individual who does not possess this knowledge of the fundamental measurements of an artwork or aesthetic judgment. Will this individual have the same response as myself? Let's say he/she will say I like the colors, the shapes, the form in a crude manner, however indicating the principles of art. Will he/she unknowingly have the same experience as myself? I discovered [from the] readings and conversation[s], that I would not trade my knowledge of art and that this knowledge definitely enhances my aesthetic experience.

In her post-study interview, Isabel states:

> As a teacher, the study enlightened me to the various philosophies and made me reflect on my personal views and perceptions. I became aware of the . . . influences [from] ancient Greek to modern [times, which] . . . presented me with the option of re-creating my teaching style to a more modern way. It influenced me enough to have created some lessons in which the development of the product, the experience itself, was the objective. . . . I don't know to what degree this exercise was unaffected by my teachings to my students.

It is avoiding the cost of ignorance, rather than an increased emotional impact, that influences Isabel to incorporate information in her curriculum.

At the end of session twelve, after I had turned off the tape recorder, Isabel provided me with an excellent example of how she "re-created her teaching style." Having been influenced by the

readings about Picasso's Guernica. Isabel made copies of the readings for her own students. She presented the readings to one class before projecting a slide of Guernica. She did not present the readings to another class before projecting the same slide. She then recorded the conversation about the painting as it unfolded in each class. The class that read the material before viewing the slide appeared to be much more enthusiastic about the painting and was seemingly able to engage in germs of aesthetic conversation, much as we did in the study. The class that did not read the materials appears, on the tape at least, to be struggling with the content of the painting and appears to lose interest in the painting soon after the slide is projected. While this experiment may not be entirely empirical, it was enough to persuade Isabel to include information in all of her classes in order to encourage reflective and informed dialogue.

While Sally and Isabel had different reasons for doing so--Sally incorporating information to enhance emotional response and Isabel to avoid the high cost of ignorance--both participants chose to incorporate information in the form of slides and reading materials in their respective curricula, in an effort to provide their students with, "the language needed to articulate the effect a work has on them."

In the following section, Yvette, Jane and Abigail explain how information deepened their aesthetic experience and, in section 4. 3. 4. Jane and Abigail detail a slightly different way of sharing information with their students.

4. 3. 3. Cognition in Deepening Aesthetic Experience

I wrote in chapter 1 that "as a person with aesthetic skills" I was able to challenge myself to "engage with more diverse art styles and felt more comfortable judging the quality of visual objects." Isabel provides an example of this same phenomenon in the previous section, when she acknowledges how the readings and conversations enhanced her aesthetic experience. In this section, we shall see how Jane (in her final paper) and Abigail (in her post-study interview) appear to enjoy similar benefits from engaging in cognitive inquiry. In her final paper Jane writes:

> I have been encouraged to look into what is disliked and give free discourse on this, not just what appeals to us. I have found that there is so much to learn from this.

Likewise, Abigail becomes more open to viewing diverse styles of art, explaining in her post-study interview that:

> As a viewer, I guess I became more willing to look at art created from the Italian renaissance up to the impressionists, which had always been a period of time I was never all that interested in. But, knowing more about the artists and what they were thinking, I'm more willing to look and say, "Wow, what is going on here?" rather than just walking by and saying "Oh, just another dusty old painting; I don't want to look."

Both participants acknowledge a willingness to look at a broader range of objects due to an expanded knowledge base. Quick, surface-level evaluations no longer suffice--content and contextual information now guide evaluation.

While Jane and Abigail acknowledge that information encouraged them to expand their viewing comfort zones, Yvette credits her increased level of cognitive understanding with improved discernment:

> The discussions involving art history . . . helped to establish for us the power structure which set the climate for the creation of art masterpieces or . . . [who] commissioned particular styles of art[,] particularly in [W]estern civilization[. This information] gave clear premise from which to draw conclusions about particular types of . . . images.

She continues:

> My interest and curiosity in the history of the Western work was more limited than the African Masks or the works of the other indigenous cultures. I began to question my lack of intellectual curiosity but I began to realize that only reflected an interest much deeper in the motive for creating so connected with the spiritual, nature life, of the Navaho in their sandpainting or the masks as part of the ceremony for the Dan people.

Like Isabel, Yvette maintains that cognition and emotion or to use her word, "spirit" are separate entities, with cognition guiding the creative endeavors of "Western" artists, and "spirit and nature" guiding the creative endeavors of "other indigenous cultures." Despite the variety of comments made by participants, each excerpt illustrates that possessing information provides the insights necessary to evaluate works of art with a greater degree of sophistication. That is, in contemplating the subject of the work, and the artist's intentions, and uncovering traditional hierarchical tenets of Western art, these participants were motivated to consider more

than a work's formal surface qualities, instead building a story around the object in light of its content and contextual history.

To this point, each study participant has articulated how possessing information deepened her aesthetic understanding and expanded her aesthetic boundaries, with Sally, Molly, and Isabel citing examples of how they incorporate information in their curricula. However, while Jane and Abigail report sharing information with their students, in the next section we learn of their concern about the potential negative side-effects of this practice.

4. 3. 4. Cognition as a Benchmark for Aesthetic Conversation

In her pre-study interview, Jane describes her surprise encounter with John Wilson's sculpture Eternal Presence at the Afro-American Museum in Roxbury, Massachusetts, as "powerful," which she acknowledges, is "why I was really delighted when the show at the MFA came and I was able to find out more about [him]." In her post-study interview, Jane describes a field trip with her students and the willingness of the bus driver to reroute so that students could catch a glimpse of Eternal Presence:

> We're on the bus, and [I was teaching the students about Eternal Presence] . . . and I said "what's it saying? What makes you say that?" And everybody would raise their hand, and give a dialogue, right on the bus. We're running the classroom right out of the bus. And I said, "well that's if you were the head, and now what if you were passing by? What kind of conversations would go on?" And they played that out, and I said "alright, your homework over vacation, take these little blue books. We each get to write a play about the conversation, passing by, and from the head. And we'll video it. We'll just take shots of this head, and you'll each get to do the play."

While Jane engages her students in conversation by creating a dialogue around John Wilson's sculpture, a strategy she acknowledges learning in the study, Abigail initiates a conversation with her students by recalling the concept of "artists' intentions," which she first considered while participating in the study:

> I had to take first graders to the Rose Art Museum. And we were supposed to be discussing portraits. And the woman who was supposed to lead the discussion, she didn't want to do the discussion with the first graders about the actual portraits because she was a little nervous talking to first graders about paintings. So, I ended up doing that. I had to research the artists before I went to talk to the kids about them. And I helped her pick out which paintings I thought we could look at, and some paintings we shouldn't look at because of *nudity,* things like that. But, others were too big, and we had to take them into this little room, and we got to go right up to them and look at them, and they got this close to them. And so it was interesting talking to first graders about why people painted pictures of themselves. And first graders were like "Well, why would they paint themselves so ugly?" And I would turn it around and say "Why do *you* think he would paint himself so ugly?" So I think participating in this study made me more comfortable doing that, having just done all this talking about artist's intentions.

Jane and Abigail's knowledge about the particular works of art,--acquired by visiting an exhibit at the MFA, and researching artists included in the exhibit at the Rose Art Museum, respectively--provided benchmarks for aesthetic conversation with their students. However, Jane and Abigail already had some experience sharing information with their students, as evident in their pre-study interviews. Therefore, this practice was not new for Jane and Abigail, as it was for Sally and Isabel. What *was* new was their integration of conversational teaching methods, as modeled in the study, in this existing practice. Jane uses the encounter with Eternal Presence to start a conversation between her students and

the sculpture; Abigail acknowledges that participating in this study made her feel more comfortable leading her students in a conversation about the portraits at the Rose Art Museum. Abigail's comment becomes even more poignant when compared to her pre-study interview comment; specifically, that though she made repeated attempts, Abigail found it "really hard to initiate a dialogue" with her students about art. Further, while Sally and Isabel rely on slides and written materials to spark a conversation with their students, Jane and Abigail rely on encounters with the original artworks and share with their students information they have researched outside the classroom.

Sally and Isabel encourage cognition to help their students understand content and context; Jane and Abigail encourage cognition to help students interpret the message of the artwork and to understand their subjective responses. For example, Jane asks her students, "What's it saying? What makes you say that?" and Abigail asks, "Why do *you* think he would paint himself so ugly?" Thus, by insisting that students carefully consider the questions they pose, Jane and Abigail express a willingness to help students better understand their subjective interpretations. Sally and Isabel, on the other hand, express more interest in helping students understand the content of the artworks.

4. 3. 5. Information as Interfering with Authentic Response

While the preceding excerpts illustrate different methods of and reasons for incorporating information into the curriculum, for Jane and Abigail this process comes at a cost. The excerpts that follow from their final papers illustrate this point.

First, let us look at Jane:

> Using art slides in the classroom has given my students opportunities to speak about art, and question what made the artists create their work. It leads us into history and the cultural environment and influences of the artist. . . . Although I sometimes found that the readings stood between my initial response and colored my reaction, over time the readings allowed greater understanding. In teaching, I would invite a second viewing after readings to gauge first responses. I think I will be encouraging kids to first write then share to reinforce everyone's voicing their own opinions and their first "take."

Perhaps it is this concern about purity of response that enabled Jane to realize what she values most about art:

> I found that my interest is often based on what the art offers back to the people and how the people might participate with the art, how art influences our lives, how it "speaks" to us. In my teaching I am always reaching for a personal statement from the students often involving writing, especially the use of poetry. I reach for how art gives us a vehicle for our hearts to speak. I reach for stories that evolve from children through their pictures, allowing the student access to the written language of their own creation and to their self-pride.

Echoing similar concerns in her final paper, Abigail asks:

> Do children make real art?
> Is it enough for children to mess about in the studio?
> Is exposure to adult art necessary?
> Is exposure to aesthetics possible?

Jane and Abigail focus on the authenticity of the children's responses to guide pedagogy. Jane--who acknowledges that "Although [she] sometimes found that the readings stood between

[her] initial response and colored [her] reaction, over time the readings allowed greater understanding"--plans to "gauge" her students "first response," hoping to reinforce the authenticity of the students' "first take." Earlier in her final paper, Abigail states:

> The readings added greater understanding to the work, but also begged the question of how well an object spoke for itself. And then there were the objects that were outside the [W]estern concept of art. Is aesthetic understanding a universal language? Does it matter that one doesn't understand the context of an artwork, yet is still moved by it? Is it possible to hate an art object once one understands the cultural context?

While Jane's concern about the effects of reading materials on "initial response" is more clearly stated, both Jane and Abigail question the merit of adult or otherwise professional art examples, concerned that these influences might contaminate authentic responses, and make students' own creative products less about their personal experiences and more about the merits of works by professional adult artists--a rote style of learning that both participants leveled strong criticism against throughout the study. This may be one reason why aesthetic conversation is so appealing: instead of relying on an absent authority (e.g., artist or author) to dictate meaning, when viewing or creating an art object with no outside input, the child becomes the author of his/her own meaning.

While Jane and Abigail express mild reservations about including information in the curriculum, Yvette is strongly opposed. Yvette believes that information only reinforces the academic hierarchy that has plagued Western art for centuries:

> I feel art history should not motivate their [her students'] creations because it might interfere with the perceptions, particularly of young children. I think using the work of established artists may reinforce, highlight or show comparisons but should not be offered up as something for children to aspire to because it limits new inventions.

Yvette reiterates her suspicion of information in her post-study interview when she explains:

> And that also relates to teaching, because you don't want to dictate to children what they are going to create. So that reinforces my view that the artist, the student is already an artist and it's up to us to allow . . . I mean that's our job, my job, is . . . to give as little influence in what they do, in order for it to be a really creative innovative piece. The less you interfere, the more it is really the child's. And if I believe that for the children that I teach, then it goes back and affects me as an artist.

Sally, Molly and Isabel, are able to bridge the gap between cognition and emotion as a result of participation in the study, and Jane and Abigail adopt conversational methods in their curricula to dialogue information, a practice they learned in the study. By contrast, Yvette consistently denounces--in her pre-study interview, throughout the study, in her final paper, and during her post-study interview--the use of external influence; art made by other, often adult professional artists; or information, believing it to "interfere with [student] perceptions," and worse, "limit new inventions."

4. 3. 6. Summary

Sally, Molly, and Isabel articulate their discovery that information enhances the emotional response in aesthetic experience. Citing this as their justification for doing so, these participants incorporate

information, in the form of slides and written materials, in their curricula.

Yvette, Jane, and Abigail recognize that information broadens their aesthetic comfort zones. Information encourages Jane and Abigail to look at a broader range of images, while for Yvette, such information legitimizes her criticism of Western hierarchy. Despite acknowledging their practices of sharing information with their students, Jane and Abigail question whether this information "is necessary" as it might "color" their students authentic responses. While Jane and Abigail muse about this concept and Jane explains her practice of "gauging" student response to check for authenticity, Yvette gives strong reasons for refusing to adopt information guided teaching strategies in her teaching practice.

Yvette, Jane, and Abigail report some degree of distinction between internal influence and external influence,[6] with external influence taking the form of adult, professional examples that might contaminate the authentic responses of students. Sally, Molly, and Isabel do not report distinguishing internal influence from external influence and express no degree of concern that external influence might contaminate otherwise authentic, internal responses.

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[6]The *Oxford Universal Dictionary* defines internal as "Of or belonging to the inner nature of man; mental or spiritual" (1029), and external as "Situated outside; pertaining to, connected with, or lying towards, the outside" (p. 661). Influence is defined as "To cause to flow in; to infuse, instill (p. 1002). Internal influence as used above, can be defined as "ideas that originate from within, uninspired by outside forces." External influence as used above can be defined as "ideas generated from the outside, inspired by outside forces."

Table 10 summarizes the cognitive responses made by participants.

Table 10

Summary of Cognitive Responses

Sally, Molly, and Isabel	Believe that information enhances the emotional response in the aesthetic experience. Citing this as their justification for doing so, these participants incorporate information, in the form of slides and written materials, in their curricula. Sally, Molly and Isabel do not report distinguishing internal from external influence and express no degree of concern that external influence might contaminate otherwise authentic, internal responses.
Jane and Abigail	Recognize that information broadens their aesthetic comfort zones and encourages them to look at a broader range of images. Jane and Abigail both make distinctions between internal and external influence, and despite acknowledging their practices of sharing information with their students, question whether this information "is necessary" as it might "color" their students authentic responses. Jane explains her practice of "gauging" student response to check for authenticity.
Yvette	Like Jane and Abigail, Yvette recognizes that information broadens her aesthetic comfort zone. She uses such information to legitimize her criticism of Western hierarchy, and gives strong reasons for refusing to adopt cognitive teaching strategies in her teaching practice. Also like Jane and Abigail, Yvette make distinctions between internal and external influence, with external influence taking the form of adult, professional examples that might contaminate the authentic responses of her students.

In the next section we discover that, while not all participants mention an imaginative response, the idea of releasing the imagination as viewer, creator, or teacher, is accepted among those who do respond.

4. 4. The Effect of Imaginative Inquiry on the Aesthetic Understanding of Study Participants

Sally, Isabel, Jane, and Abigail made a total of six comments about imagination in their final papers and the post-study interview; I have placed these comments into four categories. Interestingly, no comments were made about the mind's capacity to recall past

experiences and the imagination's ability to associate them with current stimuli. Table 11 provides an overview of comments concerning imagination.

Table 11

Imagination in the Aesthetic Experience

Comments	Sally	Isabel	Jane	Abigail	response rate	Text Discussion
The artist's assumed thought process	X	X		X	50%	4. 4. 1.
Encouraging students to consider the artist's assumed thought process				X	16%	4.4.1.
Pretending to be one with the artwork			X		16%	4. 4. 2.
Encouraging students to be one with the artwork			X		16%	4. 4. 2.

4. 4. 1. Imagination and the Artist's Assumed Thought Process

In chapter 1, I wrote that "contemplating content and context constructs knowledge of a work; that is, this line of inquiry recalls the era and culture of the work's creation, thereby allowing the viewer to ponder the role the work played in the culture at large and

how it represented the values of a long-ago society. By constructing knowledge, cognition helps to release the imagination, an important component in the aesthetic experience."

In her post-study interview, Abigail demonstrates how cognition assisted her with imaginative inquiry. She credits information for providing the impetus for her contemplation of "the artists, and what they were thinking":

> As a viewer, I . . . became more willing to look at art created from the Italian renaissance up to the impressionists, which had always been a period of time I was never all that interested in. But, knowing more about the artists and what they were thinking, I'm more willing to look and say, Wow, what is going on here?" rather than just walking by and saying, "Oh, just another dusty old painting; I don't want to look." [7]

Later in the interview, Abigail relates a story about how she challenged her students to consider "artist intentions":

> I was asked to teach about cave painting. And Cave paintings are a place where we know nothing about the artists' intentions. And I was thinking, well, how do I relate these cave paintings through sixth grade experience. You know, how do I get them to engage in these cave paintings. So what I did was I compared graffiti art to cave paintings. And asked them, what do you think are the intentions behind these? Do you think these cave artists had the same intentions as these graffiti artists?

While Abigail credits information with releasing her imaginative response, in her final paper, Sally explains that it is her "strong, creative response" that leads to imaginative queries.

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[7] Several statements made by participants can be considered as belonging to more than one component. As a result, some excerpts will appear more than once in this chapter.

She writes:

> When I look at a piece of artwork, my first thought[s] usually are:[8]
> - How did the artist do this?
> - How did the artist get the paint (or other media) to look like that?
> - How many years of practice did that take?
> - ** I wonder if I can ever learn to paint (or sculpt) like that?
> - ** How can I teach my students some of these techniques?

With these questions, Sally demonstrates the same pattern of thought she followed with her perceptual and cognitive comments: that is, she makes a conscious effort to reflect on her own viewing and creating practices, with the goal of deepening the aesthetic understanding of her students, much like her own aesthetic capacity was expanded.

While Sally acknowledges engaging in imaginative inquiry before the study began, Abigail credits the study with providing the tools she needed both to consider "the artists and what they were thinking" and to challenge her students to do likewise.

In the second paragraph of her final paper Isabel refers to the transcripts from her pre-study interview as a benchmark with which to gauge her expanded aesthetic understanding. She writes:

> During my first interview . . . I spoke about Dali's surreal experience. His own reality. He makes you wonder what really went on in his mind. . . . [Dali] becomes his own truth provider, through his intrinsic expression projected onto a canvas or artifact.

She compares what she assumes to be Dali's thought process while creating a work of art with her own:

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[8] Bullets and stars emphasis of Sally.

> [During the interview I said] the reason why I feel that I can identify with his work, is because I feel that he paints from his subconscious. He's emotional about [it]. When I paint there is so much information that I provide you with, you can read many things. However, the ultimate say and the ultimate meaning comes from me and it's always with me, and it'll die with me probably.

Isabel believes that, like her, Dali paints from his subconscious and that he legitimately keeps some of the work's meaning to himself. All the while, Isabel constantly tries to solve these riddles in order to understand more about Dali the "real person." This is apparent in a later passage when, again referring to comments made during her pre-study interview, she writes:

> I found myself communicating with the artist [,] and asking the question[,] "What possessed you to do this? . . . some of his ideas are ingenious. . . . if I could only get a little bit of that information out there, just learn a little bit more about him. Like really know the real person.

Connecting her own creative process to what she suspects to be Dali's creative process gives Isabel more confidence in her creative endeavors. She believes that, like her, Dali is legitimate because he paints from the "subconscious." She also believes that, like her, Dali has the right to withhold some meaning, even though his viewers might wish to know more.

These examples illustrate how Sally, Isabel, and Abigail engage with imaginative inquiry by considering the possible thought process of the artist. While these assumptions are speculative, it is clear how such inquires enable these women to "communicate" with a work of art and the artist who created it. The imaginative comments made by these women are not unlike those made by interviewees in

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's study who "dialogued" with the artist through the work, or "dialogued with the subject of the work as a way of stimulating fantasy and imagination" (66).

4. 4. 2. Pretending to Be One with the Artwork

Crediting cognition as releasing the imagination is an example of external influence (i.e., information that is available in printed, visual, and audio form, all examples of external influences). Internal stimuli can also trigger the imagination. In her final paper, Jane presents us with a clear example of how focusing on internal stimuli can trigger an imaginative response when, in reference to her perceptual comments, she writes:

> In all my perceptual commentaries I express a strong kinesthetic and visual response to my aesthetic experience. I express being drawn in, up, around, moving around, following an energy flow, responding to the power of a presence or a geometric structure underlying an image. This kinesthetic language surprises me; although I think of myself as a dancer in "constant movement," I . . . hear it [as well when I'm trying to] understand(ing) my connections to the world.

She provides us with an excellent example of "a strong kinesthetic and visual response" by citing a comment she made during session nine while viewing Da Vinci's Last Supper:

> [The] Last Supper: I want to walk the distance, travel down the table. . . . look at the groups . . . be there with the hands. We love to frolic in the direct tactile . . . the geometry draws me . . . Leonardo's painting is full of sound, emotional sounds of conversation.

As with her perceptual and cognitive comments, Jane calls on internal influence to guide her, and her students, through aesthetic experience.

Likewise, in the example below, Jane challenges her students to be "one with the object" by role playing with John Wilson's sculpture Eternal Presence:

> We're on the bus, and [I was teaching the students about Eternal Presence] . . . and I said "what's it saying? What makes you say that?" And everybody would raise their hand, and give a dialogue, right on the bus. We're running the classroom right out of the bus. And I said, "well that's if you were the head, and now what if you were passing by? What kind of conversations would go on?" And they played that out.

Jane depends on internal stimuli to release her imagination and guide her through an aesthetic conversation as viewer and creator. By encouraging her students to do the same, she connects her personal life with her more public role of teacher.

4. 4. 3. Summary

From the preceding examples, it is clear that the aesthetic understanding of Sally, Isabel, Jane, and Abigail deepened because they engaged in imaginative inquiry. With the exception of Abigail, who credits the study with encouraging her to consider "the artist and what they were thinking," Sally, Isabel, and Jane acknowledge that the imaginative response has always had a role in their aesthetic experiences. Though it is not an idea gleaned from the study, the study provided them with an opportunity to reflect on this practice.

As was the case with perceptual involvement, prolonged viewing of a single object allowed participants to thoroughly explore any imaginative qualities, thus facilitating awareness of existing or new viewing practices. Conversing about imaginative discoveries allowed participants to reflect on personal viewing practices, assess

others' interpretations, and transport this information into the classroom to strengthen teaching practices. Table 12 provides an overview of this summary.

Table 12

Summary of Imaginative Responses

Sally	Credits creativity with the release of her imaginative engagement, and considers viewing, creating, and teaching in her imaginative comments.
Isabel	Does not name any one component with providing the impetus for imaginative inquiry. Instead, she focuses solely on viewing and creating.
Abigail	Credits cognition with releasing her imagination, reports connecting her imaginative response between viewing and teaching.
Jane	Does not report any external stimuli in her imaginative response; rather, she reports referring only to internal stimuli to release her imagination.

While prolonged viewing may have stimulated an imaginative response, it does not appear to have facilitated a strong emotional reaction.

4. 5. The Effect of Emotional Inquiry on the Aesthetic Understanding of Study Participants.

Having added up the frequency of types of responses from her personal weekly transcripts, Molly noticed that emotion was her "second most frequent category," yet she does not elaborate on this finding elsewhere in her final paper. Isabel describes Dali as being "emotional" about his creative process in her final paper, defining emotion as "the passion or the intrinsic expression manifested on the

canvas." Despite these somewhat compelling comments, only Yvette, Jane, and Abigail discuss emotion in any detail in their final papers.

Yvette, Jane, and Abigail made a total of three comments on emotion in their final papers; I have grouped these in two categories. No comments on emotion were made by participants during the post-study interview. Table 13 provides an overview of comments concerning emotion.

Table 13

Emotion in the Aesthetic Experience

Comments	Yvette	Jane	Abigail	response rate	Text discussion
Emotion as the feeling affect a work of art has on us.	x	x		66%	4. 5. 1.
Emotion in the creative process			x	33%	4. 5. 2.

4. 5. 1. Emotion as the Feeling Affect a Work of Art Has on Us

Yvette cites an "emotional response" as being what motivates her to engage with works of art. In her final paper she writes:

> Reading back over the several weeks of transcripts I realize I am personally motivated by my emotional and communicative response to the pieces we viewed.

She then provides an example:

> My interest and curiosity in the history of the Western work was more limited than the African Masks or the works of the other indigenous

> cultures. I began to question my lack of intellectual curiosity but I began to realize that only reflected an interest much deeper in the motive for creating so connected with the spiritual, nature life, of the Navaho in their sand painting or the masks as part of ceremony for the Dan people.

As she does with her cognitive comments (see section 4. 3. 5.), Yvette identifies how this practice is consistent with her teaching methods:

> I also realized how closely tied my response to viewing or appreciating art is connected to my teaching practices which I feel must be based on the view that my role is to create an atmosphere to foster the natural ability, expression, communication of the child in his/her reaction [to] the world in which they are a part.

Here, Yvette reiterates her belief that emotion is an important reason to view or create art. If, as she suggests, the motivation to create art in "indigenous cultures" lies within a "spiritual, nature life," then she believes it is her "role" as an art teacher to provide a similar environment for her students.

Likewise, Jane believes that emotion has a place is all art and that art has a place in the heart:

> I found that my interest is often based on what the art offers back to the people and how the people might participate with the art, how art influences our lives, how it "speaks" to us. In my teaching I am always reaching for a personal statement from the students often involving writing, especially the use of poetry. I reach for how art gives us a vehicle for our hearts to speak. I reach for stories that evolve from children through their pictures, allowing the student access to the written language of their own creation and to their self-pride.

Yvette and Jane were the only participants to apply comments about emotion to viewing and teaching. The other comment on emotion, made by Abigail, involves the role of emotion in the creative process.

4. 5. 2. Emotion in the Creative Process

As defined in chapter 1, for me emotion in the creative process involves "reliving the excitement of the original experience." For Abigail, emotion is inextricably linked to the materials she uses:

> I all but ceased to do fabric art years ago because of money. Landscapes and posters were easier to sell and for people to comprehend as art. For me fabric is the most natural way to express emotions. I think of my landscapes as more cerebral. Ten years ago I became sober in A.A. For a long time I had to hold strong emotions at bay to keep from being engulfed in chaos. Even the few fabric pieces I did became more design and less message.

Abigail believes so strongly in the relationship between fabric and emotion, that she stayed away from fabric at a time when she was afraid her emotions might get the best of her.

Abigail expresses a strong emotional response to art materials--her own as well as materials used by other artists--throughout the study. For example, during our first study session, she defends her disregard for the artist Adolph Gottlieb's painting Blast I, with the following comments:

> He just rubs me the wrong way. I hate . . . the colors. This red-orange. . . . Practically straight out of the tube colors. Probably was straight out of the tube. Orangie there, and bright yellow there, and black. And, the colors are stupid, there's no subtlety. And then there's these marks below, this thing balances this thing. Not a very profound statement.

In both of her comments, Abigail gives outspoken evidence of the strong connection between emotion and art materials.

4. 5. 3. Summary

Yvette and Abigail made two comments about emotion in the aesthetic experience. Yvette's comment is consistent with her habit of connecting viewing habits with teaching practice; Abigail's comment is consistent with her contention that emotion can be infused in art materials. See Table 14 provides a summary of the comments on emotion.

Table 14

Summary of Comments on Emotion

Yvette:	Cites an emotional response as what motivates her to engage with works of art.
Abigail	Comment on emotion is consistent with her contention that emotion can be infused in art materials.

Emotion did not have a high frequency of responses among participants. However, the next section illustrates that discovery, whether formal or personal, was important for four out of the six participants.

4. 6. The Effect of Discovery on the Aesthetic Understanding of Study Participants

Sally, Yvette, Isabel, and Jane made a total of six comments concerning discovery in their final papers and post-study interview; I have divided these into three categories. See Table 15 on the next page for an overview of comments concerning discovery.

Table 15

Discovery in the Aesthetic Experience

Comments	Sally	Yvette	Isabel	Jane	Response rate	Text Discussion
Formal and personal discovery in the role as viewer			X		17%	4. 6. 1.
Connecting personal discovery with teaching practices	X	X		X	50%	4. 6. 2.
Connecting personal discovery with learning styles		X		X	33%	4. 6. 3.

4. 6. 1. Connecting Formal Discovery and Personal Discovery in the Role as Viewer

In her final paper, Isabel provides a personal discovery statement, proceeds to a formal discovery statement, and then explains how these two forms of discovery deepen her understanding of the artist's process and of herself as the viewer. She writes:

> I discovered that my percept[ual and] emotional response[s] and various levels of the study have been present on my initial thinking (interview). . . . I was simply shocked to discover how much of my knowledge (aesthetic understanding) of art is based on my own . . . educat[ion and] . . . my formal training of art (element and principles).

She illustrates how this personal discovery of the influence of her "formal training of elements and principles" informs her viewing method:

> I enjoyed the organic shapes. He [Dali] doesn't focus on geometric shapes. He uses organic or biomorphic shapes, and there is harmony.

With her formal training as her guide, Isabel studies the "qualities of each section to understand how it relates to the whole." By allowing herself time with the artwork and by bringing "a measure of concentration to the viewing process," she begins to ask questions of the artist while reacting to his work:

> I found myself communicating with the artist, and asking the question "What possessed you (Dali) to do something like this?"

In the following passage, Isabel illustrates how these two discoveries lead her to an even deeper, more informed personal discovery:

> Wow! What a discovery, part of my aesthetic experience is formed on the questions that I posed and the answer that I keep searching for. This constant interaction or dialogue . . . continues to occur between me and the painting, and the need to know the answers from the artist himself.

Isabel's reflection on pedagogical influences provides her with the language to needed to articulate her viewing process and to make even more personal discoveries as a result. While Isabel, who possesses sufficient language skills to explain her discovery, appears elated at making this connection, Sally, who acknowledges her lack of

verbal skills, assumes a more subdued voice with her personal discovery, as we shall see in the next section.

4. 6. 2. Connecting Personal Discovery and Teaching Practice

In her final paper, Sally acknowledges that she was "uncomfortable" during the pre-study interview and while participating in the required conversation during the study sessions. In her final paper, Sally writes:

> I have come to realize that I have great difficulty verbalizing all of the thoughts and feelings I have during an aesthetic experience. . . . This discovery is a key factor in why I have usually avoided incorporating art history into my curriculum.

As you will recall from section 4. 3. 2., Sally demonstrates a willingness to incorporate in her curriculum information gleaned from the study, with the goal of deepening the aesthetic understanding of her students, much like her own aesthetic capacity was expanded during the study. In this case, having realized that cognitive inquiry aids her in "verbalizing thoughts and feelings," Sally provides her students with written materials about the artworks she shows them. In her post-study interview she states:

> I have just begun using slides of famous artwork in my classroom since the installation of shades in my room. I feel more than ever, that art history is an integral part of high school art education. I now feel more comfortable helping students participate in an aesthetic experience.

While Sally adjusts her teaching methods to accommodate personal discovery, Yvette and Jane use their personal discoveries to support their teaching practices. Yvette discovers that what she assumes to be the motivation for creating art in "indigenous cultures"--that is, to connect with the "spiritual, nature life" inside of us--in turn motivates her to re-create the same environment in the classroom:

> I also realized how closely tied my response to viewing or appreciating art is connected to my teaching practices which I feel must be based on the view that my role is to create an atmosphere to foster the natural ability, expression, communication of the child in his/her reaction [to] the world in which they are a part.

While Yvette concentrates on the assumed thought processes of the artists she admires to guide her teaching practice, Jane relies on the reaction of the viewer to guide her:

> I found that my interest is often based on what the art offers back to the people and how the people might participate with the art, how art influences our lives, how it "speaks" to us. In my teaching I am always searching for a personal statement from the students, often involving writing, especially the use of poetry. I reach for how art gives us a vehicle for our hearts to speak. I reach for stories that evolve from the children through their pictures, allowing the students access to the written language of their own creation and to their self-pride.

To reiterate, Sally discovers that without information to contextualize the work and perceptual information to reflect on the formal elements of the work, she has "great difficulty verbalizing aesthetic experience." She attempts to overcome this by focusing on these two components and encouraging her students to do the same.

As well, Yvette and Jane discuss how their personal discovery informs, but does not necessarily encourage them to adjust, teaching practice. As we learn in the next section, Yvette and Jane echo this approach when they become aware of how they respond to particular learning environments. That is, they use the discovery as a way to legitimize an already existing approach.

4. 6. 3. Connecting Personal Discovery with Learning Styles

In her post-study interview, Jane summarizes the impact that participation in the study has had on the way she feels about her processing methods:

> Jane: What I really got from the study, that flows into me as an artist, me as a teacher, and me personally, is that it's the same with everything. Whether I'm working with artists, whether I'm working with my own art, whether I'm working with students in the classroom. To speak . . . those obstacles . . . We then get through the obstacles. . . . We sat here [in the sessions] and did initial takes on the work, we started to see several layers. . . . Then we would get side jammed, and start talking about . . . what happened in the classroom. . . . I . . . find that . . . [in] my artwork, and . . . in the classroom. . . . [I] simply [can] not go on . . . , if there [is an obstacle in my path. I have] to stop, discuss it, open it up, [to get through it].
>
> Meg: How did the study inform the thinking you've just described?
>
> Jane: [In] this . . . of laboratory of reading, writing, observing, and communicating about aesthetics, [a similar way of processing information] kept occurring with all of us. And I personally found that was really powerful because it let me know that this was not a function of my scatteredness, but a function of my creative analysis.
>
> Meg: How do you feel about you process now?
>
> Jane: It allows me to relax, to validate it. To simply say, okay, this is important, this is important to my process. And I am not a whole viewer, or a whole person, unless I am moving in this way of channeling my information.

Participating in the study then, has not only provided Jane with an opportunity to make such a personal discovery, but by connecting her thoughts with those of other participants and listening to their problem-solving methods, she has received feedback that makes her feel more "whole" and more self-assured in general.

Yvette, who spoke later in the interview, responds to Jane this way:

> First, let me say that I relate totally to what [Jane] said about, when you come together in a group, the group experience . . . especially if you have a hectic day, [the] need to funnel out before you begin to focus. As women, we have so many different things in our day. Because I'm preoccupied with taking care of the kids, I can't focus a lot, I just think, what's wrong with my brain? And part of it is just being totally distracted a lot of the time. In order for me to focus, it does take awhile, and it does take talking about and working through those obstacles.

She closes her commentary this way:

> And personally, I do think I learn more from a group process. . . . And I feel more comfortable in non-threatening situations where you are allowed to get rid of all that baggage of that day, and to learn about other peoples process. Then it seems more genuine, rather than somebody up there just telling you this is the way it is, and putting you on the spot to have an answer, 'cause, that really isn't your answer when you're put on the spot, it's just what comes to your mind under pressure.

4. 6. 4. Summary

Engaging in this study provided participants with the opportunity to engage in both formal and personal discovery. For Isabel, personal discovery led to formal discovery and ultimately to an understanding of how both forms of discovery inform the meaning she makes of visual objects. For Sally, Yvette, and Jane, personal discovery led to deeper understanding of teaching practices. In Sally's case, this

discovery encouraged her to adjust her teaching methods; for Yvette and Jane, this discovery reinforced their teaching methods. The conversational methods I used in the study held great appeal for Yvette and Jane. They report realizing that this was how they learn best, which has led them to feel more comfortable as learners. Feeling more comfortable about ourselves as creators of art is the focus of the next section. See Table 16 for a summary of the discovery comments made by participants.

Table 16

Summary of Discovery Responses

Sally	Personal discovery led to a deeper understanding of her teaching practice, which encouraged her to adjust her teaching methods.
Yvette	Personal discovery led to a deeper understanding, and reinforcement of, her viewing, creating and teaching practice, and insight about her learning style.
Isabel	Personal discovery led to formal discovery and ultimately to an understanding of how both forms of discovery inform the meaning she makes of visual objects.
Jane	Personal discovery led to insight about what constitutes a comfortable learning environment.

4. 7. The Creative Response in the Aesthetic Experience

All participants mention a creative response in the final paper or in the post-study interview. In all, a total of nine comments were made pertaining to the creative response in the aesthetic experience; I have divided these into three categories. Table 17 on the next page presents a breakdown of these categories.

Table 17

The Creative Response in the Aesthetic Experience

Comments	Sally	Molly	Yvette	Isabel	Jane	Abigail	% of responses	Text discussion
Creative response as viewer	X			X			22%	4. 7. 1.
Creative response as artist		X	X	X		X	44%	4. 7. 2.
Connecting viewing and creating in the curricula	X		X		X		33%	4. 7. 3.

4. 7. 1. Creative Response as Viewer

Encountering a work of art (external stimuli) and transforming the experience into a visual problem to be solved, as I described the process in chapter 1, appears to be a practice familiar to study participants. Sally illustrates this practice in her final paper:

> When I think back on my earliest aesthetic experiences in high school or college, I can distinctly remember thinking that the most important reason for looking at a work of art was to learn how to make art or to become inspired to create art. . . I had even forgot [ten] about my earliest experiences until last month. From participating in this study, it has become so clear how I am still so deeply connected with viewing art through a creative lens.

The practice of "looking at . . . art to learn how to make art" is shared by Isabel who, again reflecting on viewing Dali's *Persistence of Memory,* writes in her final paper:

> I found myself communicating with the artist, and asking the question "What possessed you [Dali] to do something like this? . . . some of his ideas are ingenious . . . if I could only get a little bit of that information out there, just learn a little bit more about him. . . . What possessed him to create something like this. Wow! What a discovery, part of my aesthetic experience is formed on the questions that I posed and the answers that I keep searching for.

The practice of looking to learn is one with which both Sally and Isabel are familiar; Sally muses about looking to learn from works of art in general and Isabel describes an exchange with Dali's work in particular. While both excerpts suggest looking to learn was practiced before the study, each highlights how participation in the study led to awareness of this practice, with Sally describing how it has "become so clear" to her and Isabel acknowledging how surprised she is with this "discovery."

In chapter 1, I wrote that "examining and contemplating the visual processes and products of other artists enables us to know, by comparison, how successful, inventive, and groundbreaking our latest efforts are. Having knowledge of artists and art movements, and sharing a common vocabulary, provides the artist with the tools needed to experience the visual arts at a level of sophistication not otherwise possible." The level of sophistication for Sally and Isabel appears to be a deeper understanding of their viewing process, an ability to articulate this process with a more expansive vocabulary, and acknowledgment of how this practice relates to their own creative efforts. As we shall learn in the next section, this increased level of sophistication applies to the self as creator as well.

4. 7. 2. Creative Response as Artist

Comments about realizing an improved self-image and greater confidence as creator because of their participation in the study were made by Molly, Yvette, Isabel, and Abigail. Molly states in her post-study interview that:

> As an artist, I feel it's important to rekindle a desire, or thrust, to continue to create, and the study made me feel re-charged, so to speak.

While Molly claims that she feels "recharged," Yvette acknowledges a history of low "self-esteem" as an artist. In her post-study interview she explains:

> I [have] never had enough self esteem, or enough confidence in my own ability to produce work. Especially through . . . experiences, or however we feel the world views us. So, from the study, it was kind of . . . seeing that there are many ways to be an artist, to see the world, that different perceptions are valuable.

Feeling better about one's choice of materials and means of expression is also articulated by Isabel, who states in her post-study interview:

> As a person, the study served as a motivater. It presented me with new challenges. I feel proud of being a woman, a woman artist, after the conversations. Since the study I have had a few art openings, appeared on T.V. as artist of the week and educator, and started to make earrings. I feel less apprehensive, I feel more confident in general. So, it made me more aware of what being a woman artist is, and what I want to be, and how I want to be noticed, and what I want to do with my life, and my creativity.

Abigail appears to share something in common with all participants previously quoted. That is, she feels recharged, more confident, and motivated. In her final paper writes:

> Sharing thoughts and feelings on art with a group of supportive women has made me feel confident again. I thought after I sobered up I had nothing left to say (the tortured genius). But now . . .

These comments illustrate an emerging self-awareness and greater self-confidence in creative endeavors, with Molly, Yvette, and Isabel crediting "the study" with helping them gain confidence, and Abigail acknowledging that the "group of supportive women has made [her] feel confident again."

The excerpts in section 4. 7. 1. focus on the "external stimuli" of the original experience, as I described it in chapter 1. The excerpts in section 4. 7. 2. focus on "talking" about the original experience through the creative process, which I believe helps us come to know more about the experience and, ultimately, more about ourselves. Participants recognize the benefits of each approach and encourage their students to engage in similar practices as viewers or creators, as we learn in the next section.

4. 7. 3. Connecting Viewing and Creating in the Curricula

Sally illustrates the way participants connect the personal experiences of art viewing and creating in their professional lives as teachers. During session five Sally writes:

> I've been working a lot with 3-D materials, and ceramics. And just last year I sculpted my daughter's portrait in clay. And I can appreciate just how difficult it really is. Drawing is one thing, but creating it in

> clay [is another]. I just kept changing it and changing it and changing it. So I had real fascination right away with the face [of the Dan mask] and the features, and looking at it from the side. And even though these features are so different from a white person's features, just to see, to conceive how they got the eyes to look like they're coming forward was a particular interest. But then, I loved looking at each of the three separate different media, on their own, and as a unit. Just looking at the ways the shells are clustered. And looking at the hair and how it's woven. Each on its own I thought was beautiful and then it all ties together really well. And I'd love to show my students this example, to give them some ideas.

Sally connects viewing to creating and teaching. Likewise, Jane makes connections between creating, viewing, and teaching:

> In our dialogues I found I questioned continually, as I do with my students, redirecting students' inquiries to seek their perceptions. This is my approach to my own art. I am always asking, What's needed? Where am I going with this? What is this saying? What is being asked for? What color? What tonality? What space? What weight or texture? What's the message here? Am I communicating?

Despite the above comments by Sally and Jane, Yvette, in her final paper, strongly disagrees with the practice of introducing any external creative influence to her students:

> Observing children in the practice of creating, I believe that the source from which the more engaging pieces result stem from the child's being caught in the moment, inspired by his/her independent momentum, released from the hold of the expectations of the art teacher or the problem of the day. It is the job of the teacher not to control the impulse or to limit the process by a fixed notion conceived by an established order of aesthetic theory or art history.

She then goes on to quote Malaguzzi in *The Hundred Languages of Children* who says, "Creativity seems to find its power when adults are less tied to prescriptive teaching methods, but instead become observers and interpreters of problematic situations." The comment

describing her students being "caught in the moment" is especially powerful, given that Yvette uses similar language to describe her fixation with Yaming Di's The Year of the Dragon and Paul Cezanne's Turn in the Road during her pre-study interview. Finding herself "alive in the moment" while viewing The Year of the Dragon during the artist's reception, Yvette engages in conversation with the artist about his technique and trajectory as an artist, thus discovering how he combines "the experiences of East and West" in a combination of "putting together that extreme." Similarly, finding that "the way that the light bounces" in Paul Cezanne's Turn in the Road brings her into a "quiet moment," she "stop[s] at and look[s] a lot."

Despite Yvette's acknowledgment that she benefits from creative inquiry, as with cognitive inquiry, she refuses to transfer this practice to her students, believing in the case of information, that it will "limit new inventions" and in the case of creative inquiry, that it will acknowledge "an established order of aesthetic theory or art history" that has the potential to stifle "momentum" and hinder the creative "impulse." What might account for Yvette's seeming double standard--that what is good for her is not necessarily good for her students'? I explore this question in section 4. 10. 2., when I present Victor Lowenfeld's theory of visual and haptic types.

4. 7. 4. Summary

The previous discussion demonstrates how the aesthetic understanding of all study participants deepened as a result of

participating in creative inquiry. As with their perceptual comments, Sally and Jane illustrate how their personal viewing and creating habits inform classroom teaching practices. Further, as we did in section 4. 3. 3 in the context of cognitive inquiry, we re-examine how Yvette states her refusal to engage her students in creative inquiry, even though she acknowledges benefiting personally from this practice.

And, importantly, we notice from the comments in section 4. 7. 2. that Molly, Yvette, Isabel, and Abigail all report feeling empowered as artists as a direct result of participation in the study. Table 18 provides a summary of creative responses.

Table 18

Summary of Creative Responses

Sally	Illustrates how her personal viewing and creating habits inform her classroom teaching practice.
Molly	Her desire to create has been recharged as a direct result of participating in the study.
Yvette	Reports feeling empowered as an artist as a direct result of participation in the study. Even so, she states her refusal to engage her students in creative inquiry, even though she acknowledges benefiting personally from this practice.
Isabel	Reports feeling empowered as an artist, and proud to be a woman artist, as a direct result of participation in the study
Jane	Illustrates how her personal viewing and creating habits informs her classroom teaching practice.
Abigail	Sharing thoughts and feelings with a supportive group has made her feel more confident in her creative endeavors.

That these women are evaluating their own images and beliefs with a stronger voice, however, does not appear to carry over into

the next section, evaluation; only two participants included an evaluative comment in their final papers.

4. 8. The Effect of Evaluation on the Aesthetic Understanding of Study Participants

An aesthetic curriculum (or, in this instance, a qualitative case study concerned with teaching for the aesthetic experience), must include an evaluation element because it provides students with an opportunity to strengthen their aesthetic voices by articulating the meaning a work of art holds for them. I asked participants to record their evaluative response in the weekly worksheet, which modeled Martin and Jacobus' recommendation for evaluation (see Appendix A).

Molly and Isabel made a total of two comments concerning evaluation in their final papers, no evaluative comments were made by participants in the post-study interview. I have placed evaluative comments into two categories, as outlined in table 19.

Table 19

Evaluation as Strengthening the Aesthetic Voice

Comments	Molly	Isabel	Response rate	Text discussion
Level of perfection		X	50%	4. 8. 1.
Level of insight	X		50%	4. 8. 2.

4. 8. 1. Evaluating the Level of Perfection

Chapter 1 introduces the level of perfection this way: "[it] refers to our assessment of how well the form and content of an object creates a cohesive whole, or how well it satisfies our understanding of perfection." Isabel provides an example of this type of inquiry when she describes the formal elements of Dali's The Persistence of Memory:

> I enjoyed the organic shapes. He [Dali] doesn't focus on geometric shapes. He uses organic or biomorphic shapes, and there is harmony.

Isabel is so taken with Dali's painting that later in her paper she writes, "He might just be a genius." Isabel's admiration for Dali has been highlighted in several sections of this chapter. While she does not say explicitly how dialoguing with Dali through his painting has made any significant difference in the way she lives her life, it is clear that her admiration of him is great.

4. 8. 2. Evaluating the Level of Insight

Molly does not contemplate any one painting to the degree that Isabel does, nor does she cite any painting as being "perfect." Instead, she reflects on how cognition has provided her with a degree of insight. In her final paper, Molly writes:

> Through the conversations and readings, I was able to see the responses that influenced me the most. I was surprised to discover that emotion was not a priority rather . . . evaluation, which came about after reflection and rationalization. This could not have taken place without the readings and conversations that affected me throughout the study.

To understand how the readings influenced Molly's ability to evaluate an object, let us revisit comments she made during session eight, while viewing Rubens' painting of The Head of Cyrus brought to Queen Tomyris:

> The readings enhanced my understanding and . . . visual first imaging right now. [I] stop [and] say 'do I go back in time during those readings? . . . because the women don't have a great life.' . . . What role do you really have in that era? It's sad. But I wouldn't want to live in that time. It would be frustrating. . . .
>
> [But] reading [Goethe's] theory of color . . . and just to observe more color and maybe do some more study with color. And maybe experiment with the children there too, to carry it over. The detail in the costumes, everything is just astonishing really. The fabric, and the wrinkles, the wrinkles in any one of the gowns, you almost could just touch the fabric, it just looks great, just the way it [has] such detail, and such concentration, to the color and the shading. The minutist detail.

Molly, having read Goethe's theory of color and reflecting about how Rubens' painting exemplifies this theory, is able to appreciate, understand, and evaluate the object with a greater degree of sophistication. Further, Molly gains a degree of personal insight from the encounter. Unlike in her pre-study interview in which she expresses a desire to "step back in time" and live in the era of Michaelangelo, she now realizes that being a woman artist, she would surely suffer the consequences of such a move, as she would not be able to live the life of a professional artist in that period.

Reflecting on the conclusions drawn from examining the object leads Molly to a more intrinsic questioning, as described in chapter 1. As I mentioned before, when we contemplate what has been learned about an artwork, we necessarily, if only indirectly, contemplate the self. Viewing The Head of Cyrus brought to Queen Tomyris has made

Molly aware of the limits she would face as a woman artist in a previous era--limits she may not have considered before the study began.

4. 8. 3. Summary

Isabel and Molly made two evaluative comments in their final papers. Isabel's comment concerned evaluating an object for its level of perfection; Molly's comment concerned the degree of insight gained from viewing an artwork. Table 20 provides the summary of evaluative comments.

Table 20

Summary of Evaluative Comments

Isabel	Evaluates The Persistence of Memory for its level of perfection.
Molly	Evaluative comment is concerned with the degree of insight (the reality of being a woman artist during Rubens' time) gained from viewing The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyrus.

Because informed evaluation is such an important component when teaching for the aesthetic experience, it is worth noting the scarcity of evaluative comments. Evaluation, like emotion, received less mention in the final papers than it did during the pre-study interview or during the weekly sessions.

4. 9. Summary of Findings

To answer the research question, "What effect, if any, does conversation have on the aesthetic understanding of six women art

educators?," participants engaged in a qualitative case study that utilized conversational methods. It was my hope that the conversational approach would provide a supportive learning environment in which participants could speak freely about personal experiences, dialogue with others, and deepen and strengthen their aesthetic understanding and voice. Facilitating and observing this process was at once compelling and instructive.

Creating art and viewing works of art made by other artists had a positive effect on the creative growth of study participants, which was consistent with my own experience. Incorporating these two disciplines in the study allowed participants to consider and explore the components of the aesthetic experience as I presented them, some of which participants had not previously considered. *Perceptual inquiry* encouraged participants to contemplate the formal qualities of the artwork we studied and to recognize over time how these qualities influenced our initial responses to a work. Information supplied in the reading materials facilitated *cognitive inquiry,* which led to the debate as to whether possessing information clouded or clarified initial reactions.

The supportive environment fostered by conversational teaching methods frequently allowed us to explore a work more deeply than we might have individually. When viewing sculptures, *imaginative inquiry* considered the artist who made the work--his personality, techniques, and working conditions. When viewing paintings, imaginative inquiry explored the subjects of the

paintings--participants hypothesized about what the "protagonists" were thinking, saying to each other, and how they felt about the person who painted them. Occasionally, imagination allowed participants to exist within the painting and to converse with its subjects.

Emotional inquiry encouraged participants to explore their feelings and come to terms with what they believed was essential in art, whether that be the art product itself or the raw materials used by the artist. The *discovery component* inspired both formal and personal modes of discovery. That is, discovering visual clues left on the surface of the object by the artist led participants to discover things about themselves, namely what qualities of the object attracted or repulsed them and why.

Making art of their own meant that participants entered into the aesthetic dialogue as creators of their own objects and authors of their own meaning. Making the Navajo sandpainting as a group brought all of us into collaboration with one another, as we were all novices with the stunning but recalcitrant medium. The mutual respect gained from this experience prefigured respect shared at the final study session, when each of us presented an example of our own artwork to the group. Throughout the study, conversing about each image we examined encouraged thoughtful *evaluation.* The supportive atmosphere secured by mutual respect prompted strong, evaluative discussion. Group consensus was rarely reached--a sure sign of critical thinking skills at work.

Because we focused on a single work of art per session, the aesthetic understanding of study participants deepened. This approach to the components of aesthetic experience provided participants with a greater awareness of their viewing and creating habits and how these habits directly or indirectly informed their teaching practices. For some, this greater awareness prompted changes to their teaching methods. For others, this new perspective clarified and reinforced their current teaching practices. In the process, participants became more actively involved in their own culture, while simultaneously gaining a deeper understanding of and greater appreciation for other cultures. As well, participants became more fluent at reading the language of art, deciphering the meaning of visual objects, and evaluating the quality of the objects by the level of insight gained from such exposures.

Involvement in the study also provided participants with an opportunity to engage with works of art they might have otherwise overlooked. As a result, participants reported a greater willingness to explore a broader range of artworks, respected the responses of others to these artworks, and in some cases considered incorporating these or similarly unfamiliar artworks in their curricula. By questioning and deconstructing the history of Western hierarchy in the assigned readings, and by learning how this value system favors certain art styles over others, participants came to appreciate their own creative efforts and images, which due to the materials used and the subjects depicted, would never enjoy the status of "high art."

In providing a learning environment in which the obstacles of the day could be addressed and to some extent resolved, participants were freed to share with each other the methods they used to deal with a whole host of issues, including conflicts with former teachers and the institutions they attended; teaching constraints imposed by administrators or tight schedules; lack of studio time for their own work; and "peculiar" work habits. In this sharing, participants found common ground, their problem-solving skills were validated, and their confidence as individuals and as learners increased. Coming to recognize and acknowledge their work habits enabled participants to better organize their thoughts, making personal, studio, and teaching time more productive.

Conversational strategies, as advocated by the educators mentioned in chapter 2 most definitely and positively impacted the aesthetic understanding of these women art educators, and they benefited me as well. Working with these women helped to crystallize my thoughts about the importance of each component in the whole of aesthetic experience.

4. 10. Data Analysis: Interpretation of Findings

Despite the overall effect that participation in this study had on participants, three categories of the data beseech further examination: the role of cognition in aesthetic experience, the scarcity of comments on emotion during the study, and the scarcity of evaluative comments in the role of teacher. Cognition, through

information gleaned from reading materials, was the only "controversial" component of the study, despite the strong response it elicited, with half the participants reporting feeling comfortable incorporating information into their curricula, and the other half expressing concern that information might interfere with authentic response. In the pre-study interview, the response to emotion and evaluation was strong, with participants making 60 comments about emotion and 43 evaluative comments. What is surprising is the fact that these strong, early responses did not translate into a significant number of emotion-based comments during the study or comments on emotion or evaluation in the participants' final papers. No emotion-based or evaluative comments were made by participants during the post-study interview. Section 4. 10. 1. explores the controversy about incorporating cognition in the curriculum. Section 4. 10. 2. considers possible explanations for the scarcity of emotion-based comments. Section 4. 10. 3. speculates on the scarcity of evaluative comments. Section 10. 4. provides a final summary of this chapter.

4. 10. 1. The Controversy: Should Cognition Be Incorporated in the Curricula?

Sally, Molly, and Isabel responded most strongly to the study's external stimuli (the works of art that we studied and the related information) of the study. Yvette, Jane, and Abigail responded most strongly to the study's internal stimuli (the works of art that we

made and the recognition of how art speaks to our spirit). The consistency of these responses struck me as an important finding. Victor Lowenfeld's theory of visual and haptic types of viewers and creators helps to explain the consistent orientation of the responses.

4. 10 2. Victor Lowenfeld's Theory of Visual and Haptic Viewers and Creators

First by working with visually impaired individuals and then with persons with visual acuity, Victor Lowenfeld discovered that by the age of twelve years or so, individuals use one of two approaches to experience any form of visual stimuli: "visual" or "haptic" (from the Greek word *haptos*, meaning to lay hold of [Lowenfeld and Brittain 326]). Almost half of the 1,128 research participants in Lowenfeld's study demonstrated "clear visual tendencies," almost one-fourth "haptic," and the other fourth "somewhere in between" (327).

Lowenfeld and Brittain describe the visual type as:

> The visually minded individual can analyze the characteristics of shape and structure of an object and be concerned with the changing effects of these shapes as they are influenced by light, shadow, color, atmosphere, and distance. . . . For [the visual type], the complex and ever-changing appearances of shapes and form are exciting and pleasurable experiences. (333)

The responses of Sally, Molly, and Isabel to the perceptual qualities of other artists' works seem to be consistent with the visual type Lowenfeld and Brittain describe. For example, Sally characterizes impressionism as "a celebration of paint and joy and light and color";

Molly considers Michaelangelo's success as his ability to "master his own style without getting too technical"; and Isabel focuses her attention on Dali's use of "organic shapes" and credits her "formal training of art [elements and principles]" with guiding her assessment.

Conversely, Yvette, Jane, Abigail, who focus so much of their own or their students' attention on subjective response, seem likely examples of the haptic type, which Lowenfeld and Brittain define this way:

> The haptic type utilizes muscular sensations, kinesthetic experiences, impressions of touch, taste, smells, weights, temperatures, and all the experiences of the self to establish relationships to the outside world. . . . The art of the haptic is more subjective. The [viewer] becomes a part of the picture, and subjective values determine the color and form of objects. (333)

For example, Yvette realizes that her attraction to indigenous art reflects her "interest . . . in the motive for creating [art] so connected with the spiritual, nature life, of the Navaho in their sandpainting or the masks as part of ceremony for the Dan people"; Jane acknowledges that "in all my perceptual commentaries I express a strong kinesthetic and visual response to my aesthetic experience"; and Abigail credits learning about "artists intentions" with her willingness to look at a broader range of visual objects because she now "know[s] more about . . . what they [the artists] were thinking."

Sally, Molly, and Isabel appear to approach creating and teaching *primarily* as visual types; Yvette, Jane, and Abigail

primarily as haptic types.[9] For example, Sally compares her efforts at portrait drawing with Rubens' ability to get a "lifelike quality." In turn, she would like to show her student "the white gown" from the same painting as an example of how to "create the illusion of white without using just white." Molly maintains that the study has "rekindled her desire . . . to create." During session four, while viewing the Chinese painting Eating and Drinking at the Base of a Precipitous Mountain she is drawn to the "realistic form" in the painting. She wonders aloud how she could "creatively introduce this [painting technique] in a way that's fresh for the children." Referring to the perceptual qualities that infuse her work, Isabel maintains that "there is so much information that I provide you with, [although] you can read many things." She similarly describes her experience of sharing perceptual information about Picasso's Guernica with her students in order to provide them with insights on how to read the formal qualities of that painting.

Conversely, Yvette maintains that she has "never had enough self-esteem . . . to produce work" because of "the way the world views us." As a teacher, she attempts to "create an atmosphere to foster the natural ability, expression, [and] communication of the child" rather than to "control the [creative] impulse by a fixed notion conceived by an established order of aesthetic theory or art history."

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[9] Like a fourth of Lowenfeld's study sample, Molly and Abigail might be somewhere in between. For example, Molly exhibits some haptic tendencies during study sessions, and Abigail exhibits some visual tendencies during study sessions. However, the majority of comments for Molly appear to be more visual in content, and for Abigail, more haptic.

Jane realizes that she "redirect(s) her students' inquiries to seek their perceptions. This is [her] approach to [her] own art." Abigail reports "feel[ing] confident again" with her creative efforts as a result of her participation in the study. In turn, she redirects student questions--"why do *you* think he painted himself so ugly"--in order to encourage confidence when making visual assessments.

Whether visual or haptic, these styles of seeing beg the question: Do these styles of seeing affect the aesthetic development of their students? Because I was unaware of Lowenfeld's theory before I began this case study, distinguishing the visual type from the haptic type was not one of my stated goals. Even so, recognition of these viewing and creating styles may prove valuable in the pedagogy of future art educators, who--we can assume from the percentages in Lowenfeld's study--will teach to both types of viewers and creators in the classroom. In the words of Lowenfeld and Brittain:

> It is important to remember that teaching should encourage the expression of students, regardless of their mode of representation. There is no need to reward one type of representation over another, because our culture provides the opportunity for honest expression of all types. (333)

The theory of visual and haptic types is worth considering and may explain why Sally, Molly, and Isabel do not report any concern about incorporating information into their curricula, while Yvette, Jane, and Abigail do express concern about providing their students with information. Still, another of Lowenfeld's theories may also explain

the concern that information, in the form of external stimulus, might interfere with authentic response.

Yvette, Jane, and Abigail all teach elementary school children. The idea that adult art examples might interfere with the aesthetic development of the young child is consistent with Victor Lowenfeld's theory of creative and mental growth. In *Creative and Mental Growth*, for example, Lowenfeld and Brittain write:

> It should not be forgotten that the goal of an art program is to develop the thinking, feeling, and perceiving of each youngster. It is not to produce products. It is not to produce little artists. It is not to indoctrinate children into a predetermined way of viewing art. The materials and technical skills follow expression; they do not precede it. (184)

Lowenfeld's theories have influenced the training of art educators in the United States since the 1950s, when the first edition of *Creative and Mental Growth* was published. It is not unreasonable to assume, therefore, that Yvette, Jane, and Abigail are familiar with Lowenfeld, whose advice may be in keeping with their experiences of teaching art to young children. Focusing attention on the creative expressions of young children, rather than art products that young children might not be able to fully comprehend, is in keeping with Lowenfeld's advice.

4. 10. 3. The Scarcity of Emotion-Based Comments

Perhaps it was the controversy that prompted so many cognitive-based comments during the study (cognition, with 115 comments, was the fourth most frequently mentioned category after "examples of how I teach," "communication," and "perception,"

respectively). By contrast, emotion, the third most frequently mentioned category during the pre-study interview with 60 comments, received 58% fewer responses during the study and only 3 comments in the final papers; no emotion-based comments were made during the post-study interview. With just 35 comments on emotion made during the study, it seems emotional release was elusive for the participants in this study.

What might account for the paucity of emotion-based comments? In the pre-study interview, participants chose the objects to discuss; in the study sessions, *I* chose the objects we studied. Did the objects I chose fail to elicit a strong emotional reaction? Was the frequency of emotion-based comments during the pre-study interview skewed because the objects chosen by participants were of their liking and already elicited a strong emotional response? Yvette and Abigail, both haptic types, were the only participants to devote any significant space to emotion in their final papers, and both of their comments focused on emotional release in the creative process. (Yvette considered emotion the motive for creating in "Indigenous cultures," and Abigail considered that "fabric . . . [was] the natural way [for her] to express emotions.") Is there a correlation between this kinesthetic approach to emotion and the fact that both of these women appear to be haptic types? How does this kinesthetic response to emotion play out in their classrooms? How does it play out in the classrooms of participants of the visual type who do not mention emotion in their final papers?

In their pre-study interviews, all participants expressed the belief that the release of emotion was an important reason to view, create, or teach art. For the majority of participants, art styles that failed to elicit an emotional response were excluded from their creative efforts and from their curricula. As well, all participants acknowledged showing their students images or engaging them in creative processes that they perceived as being emotionally laden, with the assumption that their students would respond in kind. However, it is clear from this study's data that we cannot assume others will engage emotionally with works of art--particularly if the objects are not of their choosing. If students are to become emotionally engaged, they need to be exposed to a variety of images. Dictating which images will be viewed, as I did, clearly impacts one's ability to engage in emotional response. These findings raise the following questions which could be answered in future research studies:

- According to art educators, what makes emotion such an important reason to view, create, or teach art?
- What categories of emotion (e.g., glee, sadness, anger) are these participants referring to when they talk about emotion?
- Will teachers be able to contain the strong emotions of their students once they are released? That is, if the emotional response becomes so overwhelming that the experience ceases to be aesthetic and the student becomes distraught, how will the teacher respond?

- If the release of emotion is an initial objective for students, how will participant/educators proceed? That is, how will they help students find closure in an emotionally laden unit?

To be sure, emotional release is an important reason to view, create, or teach art--but viewing, creating, or teaching art must include much more. Suggestions must be made for facilitating emotional release, but not at the expense of other aesthetic components.

4. 10. 4. The Scarcity of Evaluative Comments in the Role of Teacher

Like emotion (60 comments), evaluation (43 comments) was a frequently mentioned category in the pre-study interview. Unlike emotion, this high frequency of responses *did* correlate with a similar number of evaluative responses during the study (67 comments, an increase of 36%). Even so, only two participants commented on evaluation, both in the role as viewer, in the final papers, no comments on evaluation were made during the post-study interview. While facilitating emotional release was mentioned as being an important reason to teach art in the pre-study interview, participants made no mention of facilitating evaluative inquiry with their students in the pre-study interview or during the study, preferring instead that students answer their own evaluative questions (i.e., Abigail requires her student to answer her own question, "Why do *you* think he would paint himself so ugly?"). This

finding is particularly striking considering that participants spoke in a strong evaluative voice about the artworks they chose to discuss in the pre-study interview and about the works we viewed together during the study. It occurred to me that the scarcity of evaluative comments in the role of teacher could, as some feminist researchers suggest, reflect teaching practices that shy away from facilitating evaluative inquiry, as women associate the word "evaluate" with "authority"--a role many women report feeling uncomfortable with (see Belenky et.al., Collins and Sandell, Hagaman).

Close examination of the data appears to support this suggestion, and raises two possible reasons for this seemingly peculiar practice. Did participants shy away from evaluative inquiry in an attempt to separate from teaching practices in their own pedagogy?, or as a way to distinguish themselves from current authorities?

4. 10. 5. Separating from Teaching Practices

Examples of how participants reflect on teaching practices from their own pedagogy are quite revealing. Yvette, who states unequivocally through-out the study and in her final paper that professional, adult examples of art should not be introduced to children as it interferes with authentic response, reflects on her own pedagogical influence during our first study session:

> Back in the days when I went to the museum school, the male teachers were really hot on DeKooning. . . . And it's interesting how you're so . . . impressed by these teachers . . . But, I remember that DeKooning was hot, and . . . I still look at a DeKooning and I . . . think, well, DeKooning is

> it . . . I wasn't thinking of . . . how he was painting women. Because I was more impressionable at that time.

During session ten we discussed Linda Nochlin's article "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists." Abigail made this comment about her own experience as a woman art student:

> The two psychology teachers at Mass. Art [both men] . . . said I had to take both psychology classes and I flunked them both because I had to walk out of them. They both said women were not really creative.

To which Jane added:

> I would have torn those people in pieces. [They think that if women] made art it was because they were supplementing their desire to have children. And this in a school that was 75% female.

In her final paper, Isabel implicates her art teachers for her lack of knowledge about women artists:

> My lack of knowledge and influences from former educators in regard to my views of women artists is evident and lacks intrinsic interest in my perception.

Which she has resolved by the post-study interview:

> As a person, the study served as a motivater. It presented me with new challenges. I feel proud of being a woman, a woman artist, after the conversations. Since the study I have had a few art openings, appeared on T.V. as artist of the week and educator, and started to make earrings. I feel less apprehensive, I feel more confident in general. So, it made me more aware of what being a woman artist is, and what I want to be, and how I want to be noticed, and what I want to do with my life, and my creativity.

The above comments illustrate a lack of role models that participants would want to emulate in their own classrooms. Perhaps it is both a desire to separate themselves from such teaching practices, and a

lack of knowledge of alternative, more constructive approaches to evaluative inquiry, that has discouraged them from positioning themselves in an authoritative role in the classroom.

4. 10. 6. Responding to Current Authorities

While the preceding comments focus on the biased opinions of male art school professors, the following comments provide typical examples of the frustrations expressed by all participants during the study regarding current authoritative regulations. During session ten, Sally said:

> I find myself constantly reassessing, no matter what the curriculum says [written by the school district art director]. What do *I* really want to do? What do *I* really want these kids to learn?

During session nine, Molly stated:

> In one school I have a dictator [the Principal], and in another school is a low key great personality for a boss. So I experiment more, have a lot of fun, with the low key person, who says, 'you're doing a great job' once in a while. The other person, she comes in to say 'it's too noisy in here.' . . . I'm evaluated by that person, when it comes to a job situation, so [I] have to tread egg shells . . . So that challenges me . . . because I . . . like kids to have choices, and I like to listen . . . to what children have to say.

Clearly, Sally and Molly acknowledge their subordinate position to authority. Perhaps more importantly, both participants acknowledge risking authoritative reprimand in favor of meeting the needs of their students. In their final papers, Yvette and Isabel make strong anti-authoritative comments. Yvette, intending sarcasm, writes:

> The central act of adults [teachers] is to activate, especially indirectly, the meaning-making competencies of children as the basis of all learning. This is the view from which I like to base my work with

> children as opposed to the view that the job of educators is to "instill good habit" into these children . . . which was the message of John Silber . . . when he was at the helm of [the Chelsea] school system, and now fortunate for us all the education czar.

Isabel writes:

> I think that although times have changed and artists have gained new ground, art educators still are exposed to governmental rulers . . . to dictate the aesthetic values in our art departments.

As the participants state so clearly, whether in their college experiences or in current educational settings, they have been intimidated or criticized by authority figures, and they don't want to impose the same pecking order on their students. And perhaps, because I was playing the role of authority in the study, the participants preferred not to subject themselves to my critical eye--assuming that like the other authorities in their lives, I would scorn their assessments. In any case, for the participants in this study, engaging students in evaluative inquiry may not be viewed as an appropriate method with which to discuss art or, in the words of Martin and Jacobus, to judge an object for its "level of perfection," "level of insight gained," or "level of inexhaustibility." Rather, in the role of teacher, participants appear to believe that evaluation is an opinion inflicted on us--in our own pedagogy or in our current roles as teachers--therefore, repeating this offense would be detrimental to students. These findings raise the following questions which could be answered in future research studies:

- Are art educators in general uncomfortable evaluating artworks, whether their students' efforts or those of professional artists', as part of classroom practice?
- What might be the reasons given to avoid evaluation as part of classroom practice?
- What supports (i.e., procedures such as conversational or connected teaching methods) do art educators need to engage students in constructive evaluative inquiry?

4. 11. Summary

Analysis of the data highlighted three findings worthy of interpretation. First, cognition was the only controversial component of the study, with only half the participants reporting some level of comfort incorporating information in their curricula. Second, while comments on emotion and evaluation were frequently mentioned in the pre-study interview, this did not translate into a high frequency of comments on emotion during the study or evaluative in the final papers. No comments pertaining to participants facilitating evaluative inquiry with their students were made during the pre-study interview, the study, or the post-study interview.
While I have no concrete data to explain these findings, I have hypothesized about the source of the cause and suggested future research studies in an effort to better understand these phenomena.

To be sure, six participants would be considered a small sample for any study, and I cannot say with any degree of certainty that

these results are representative. Still, this limited study provided compelling findings and opportunities for further research. How the data support and expand my original theory of the aesthetic experience and, based on the data, provide me with suggestions for teaching for the aesthetic experience, is the topic of the next chapter.

5. CONCLUSION: TEACHING FOR THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Teaching and learning are cyclical. As the student learns from the teacher, so the teacher learns from the student. Working with these six women convinced me that creating art and studying images made by other artists can promote creative growth and that this process can be facilitated by using conversational teaching methods. In the context of Robert Kegan's theory that confirmation plus contradiction equals continuity, working with these women provided support, or confirmation of, my hypothesis while at times their responses contradicted and therefore expanded my theory. Taken together, both have contributed to my feelings of greater resolve, promoting a sense of continuity and confidence in my own ideas. In this chapter, I reflect on aesthetic understanding and make recommendations about teaching for the aesthetic experience.

Sally and Isabel's description of engaging with the formal qualities of the works we studied confirmed my theory that engaging in perceptual inquiry is important to aesthetic understanding because recognizing formal elements and reflecting on their sensory qualities provide us with clues to the meaning of an artwork. Jane, whose "strong kinesthetic response" to artwork is an example of supplementing a visual response by engaging all of our senses, was an unexpected finding. Previously, I had considered perception as being a response *to* an object, not a way of being drawn *into* an

object. Jane's "kinesthetic language" surprised me, but not so much as the surprising feedback about cognition in the aesthetic experience.

The cognitive comments made by all study participants confirmed my hypothesis that possessing information helps us to uncover an artist's intentions by providing us with knowledge of the content and context of the work. Cognitive inquiry also allows the artist, as creator, to determine whether a piece is a "success" by evaluating how closely it resembles what had initially been envisioned, or by considering how other artists might have treated the same subject. Before the study I was convinced of two things: first, that information buoyed an emotion-based response in aesthetic experience, and second, that information can release the imagination in visual and creative endeavors. Having considered the data, it seems clear that as viewers information inspires our imaginations by compelling us to build a story around an already existing object, and that as creators our imaginations tap our knowledge of information, as we contemplate how other artists would have addressed a similar visual problem.

Yvette, Jane, and Abigail's concern that information might interfere with authentic aesthetic response contradicted my theory. On closer analysis, it became clear that when formulating my theory of aesthetic experience I neglected to consider the developmental stages of children. My original definition included examples of how both internal and external stimuli release the imagination. While

participants also made this association, they overwhelmingly equated the imagination with intrinsic stimulus. When participants spoke about an imaginative release in the context of study sessions, it was most often how to trigger something from within--an imaginative valve so to speak. The trick was to help their students learn how to release that valve.

As with my definition of the perceptual component (i.e., engaging with the formal qualities and the effect these qualities have on our senses), working with these women helped me realize that I included visual and haptic examples in my approach to defining the imaginative component; the more haptic response from participants informed me of this position.

The contention that emotion is the feeling affect a work of art has on us, with regard to the state of mind of both the artist and the viewer, was supported in Yvette's comment about the "motive for creating" in indigenous cultures such as the Dan.

The idea that emotion exists apart from cognition in aesthetic experience, contrary to my definition was suggested by Yvette, Jane, and Abigail. Yvette and Jane speak about their emotional reaction as viewers and creators of art, and how they try to foster learning environments that support emotional responses from students.

While my definition of emotion in the creative process focused on reliving and re-examining the excitement of an original experience, Abigail demonstrates how emotion can reside within art materials--she finds emotion in fabric.

My theory that discovery included both formal and personal examples led me to an important personal discovery of my own: I am a hybrid--a visual and haptic type. For example, in chapter 1 I describe making art as the "means to take the 'external stimulus' of an original experience and to transform it to a visual problem to be solved. . . . Talking about an experience [internally] through the creative process, then, not only helps us to come to know more about the experience, but ultimately it lets us come to know more about ourselves." Thus, where my theory presented itself as one type or the other, in reality there is a fluidity between the two types.

The discovery that I am a hybrid is extremely important for me and for other facilitators of aesthetic education. Acknowledging the type of viewer and creator we are and how these characteristics inform our roles as teachers can help us address bias in the classroom. It also makes students aware that alternative interpretations are possible and can ignite in them a desire to explore their own viewing and creating preferences, thus leading to important personal discoveries.

Sally and Isabel's comments about looking at art to learn how to make art supported my hypothesis by considering a combination of external and internal stimuli. Even so, most creative comments did not consider any external stimuli. Molly, Yvette, Isabel, and Abigail focused on the internal stimuli on which they relied to nurture creative growth. As was the case with imagination and emotion, the relative absence of external stimuli from participants'

comments expanded my definition of creating art, as these participants were apt to view all forms of expression as originating from within the creator.

My definition of evaluation, based on Martin and Jacobus's theory used three fundamental standards when engaging in evaluative criticism: (1) the level of perfection, (2) the level of insight gained from examining the object, and (3) the potential the object holds for further discovery at future viewing sessions, which Martin and Jacobus refer to as the object's potential for "inexhaustibility" (69). Isabel's comment about the level of perfection of Dali's Persistence of Memory and Molly's comment about gaining insight from Rubens's The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris support this definition of evaluation.

While participants were eager to evaluate the work they chose to discuss in their pre-study interview and were willing to evaluate artworks presented in the study, they were noticeably reluctant to share with their students opinions about artwork or to judge student artwork. Taken together, confirmation and contradiction contributed to continuity of my original theory of aesthetic experience, and enable me to make the following recommendation for teaching for the aesthetic experience.

5. 1. Teaching for the Aesthetic Experience

Soon after entering the doctoral program, I left my teaching position, as other demands prevented me from continuing on in that role. I

therefore have not had an opportunity to teach for aesthetic experience, other than in facilitating this case study. Despite this, facilitating this case study, coupled with reflections from my college teaching days, provide me with enough experience to make recommendations for teaching for aesthetic experience.

The aesthetic experience, the teacher must remember, is a conversation between the viewer and the work of art, or, in the creative process, the artist and the media. Therefore, conversational teaching methods should be employed when teaching for aesthetic experience. Methods for starting the conversation, techniques to keep the conversation going, and reflection on how the conversation influences aesthetic understanding are the lifeblood of an aesthetic curriculum. I suggest the following practices to successfully accomplish these goals:

1. Design the curriculum to meet the developmental position of all students

Using a version of the Perry scheme, as I did in this study, will assist with this goal, as students will respond to the curriculum according to their level of understanding or,--to use Csikszentmihalyi's term--"flow," that is, the moment "when the person's skills are in exquisite balance with the challenges presented" (22). No matter what the level of understanding of any given student, if the curriculum is designed to meet and challenge the person's skills, a

deepened understanding of the aesthetic experience as a result of participation in the curriculum is likely.

2. Teach for what Belenky et al. refer to as "connected knowing"

Sharing imperfect or in-progress thinking, as I did in this study in the role of participant-observer, provides students with a glimpse of the trajectory for more informed ideas. This is important for aesthetic understanding where ideas are informed and developed as the conversation progresses. From this research experience, I can say with all honesty that sharing my thinking with study participants did not compromise my role as facilitator; rather, it elevated my position, built on trust and respect. The time I spent researching and studying for each session was always apparent to the participants, who appreciated my efforts, and I was always able to contribute to the conversation based on these efforts. What I did not do was hold up my views as if they were something for the participants to aspire to. Instead, I simply explained where my ideas came from (they were often informed from additional readings that I had engaged in between sessions), and let participants contemplate what, if anything, my views held for them.

3. Encourage students to voice their opinions

Kegan is correct in his contention that educational goals are best met when students are encouraged to bring their "loyalties" to the

educational setting, thus feeling respected for who they are, rather than only for what they may become. Making a record of how participants understood the aesthetic experience before the study began by conducting the pre-study interview was my way of embracing Kegan's advice, and it is advice worth repeating. For a more typical academic setting (at the college or secondary school level), place reproductions of artworks on a table in the classroom at the start of the first class meeting. Ask students to chose two works of art that they find aesthetically pleasing, and one work of art that they do not like. Then, using the questions from my pre-study protocol (this time printed on paper, with space available to answer the questions), have students write their answers to each question. This will be the first entry in their journals, which I recommend styling just as we did in the study, based on Walden's journal design.

Student's will use this entry to gauge their deepened aesthetic understanding as a result of participating in the course. The journal and weekly worksheets, modeled after the one designed for this study, will serve as references for addressing the final paper topic, "What effect, if any, did enrolling in this class have on your aesthetic understanding?" As the basis for grading/evaluation, I advise assigning a final paper that asks students to trace their own understanding, as it requires them to consider their own thinking, thus keeping the conversation going between themselves and the works of art they have studied and created. To help student's follow their own deepened aesthetic understanding, provide them with a

"final paper road map," modeled after the one developed for this case study.

For subsequent sessions (i.e., after the first session and before the final paper is due), "slow looking down," as Perkins suggests by viewing only one or, for the sake of juxtaposition, only a few works of art at a time. This will help students digest information gleaned from the readings and make important discoveries about how they interpret the aesthetic experience. It also allows conversation to focus on a limited stimulus. Whenever possible, meet in a museum or art gallery, as Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson recommend, thus providing access to original artworks, and eliminating outside disturbances.

4. Provide readings about as many aesthetic components as possible, along with readings about what constitutes the aesthetic experience

In my research, studying Goodman's theory of cognition in the aesthetic experience and comparing it with Stolnitz's theory of the aesthetic attitude would have helped clarify for participants the dispute about cognition in the aesthetic experience. There are also journal articles available, such as Anne Sheppard's "The Role of Imagination in Aesthetic Experience" (see works cited) that examine the roles that cognition, emotion, and imagination play in the aesthetic experience. Any of these or similar readings should help students when considering how to define aesthetic experience.

5. Include the aesthetic tools of art viewing, art making and evaluation in the curriculum

Provide opportunities for students to create art as a group, and set a number of sessions aside to discuss and critique art made alone in the studio. Making the sandpainting as a group required that we discuss, compromise, and share our ideas for how to proceed in a medium that none of us had worked with before. This conversation and the resulting painting brought us together as cohorts; the collaboration effort cemented our developing friendship.

5. 9. Summary

Working with this group of women art educators provided confirmations and contradictions of my initial thoughts about the components inherent in aesthetic experience and how to facilitate these components in an aesthetic education. Perhaps the most significant confirmation was that creating art and studying images made by other artists <u>can</u> promote creative growth and that this process can be facilitated in a directed conversational dialogue with students.

In a world of uncertainty, violence, and despair, one might ask "Why is possessing aesthetic skills so important?." The answer for me is that works of art exist whether the public can understand them or not. If only people with knowledge of art--gained either from formal schooling or from extracurricular art experiences--can understand art, less privileged members of society will continue to

feel that the arts are exclusive and not meant for them. Such individuals will not likely be interested in art, which will perpetuate the isolation women and people of color have felt in an art world that has too often depicted them as subordinates or victims existing apart from the dominant norms of culture. David Perkins explains it well when he says "If the art in the art is invisible for the novice, so are other parts of the world we must learn to read. . . . Because we rarely find out how much we are missing, we think we aren't missing much" ("Invisible art" 41). Aesthetic experience makes the invisible visible; it bridges the chasm between student and teacher; it helps us read the world.

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Appendix A: Study Outline

GOALS OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to answer the research question "What effect, if any, does conversation have on the aesthetic understanding of women art educators. The goals of the study will vary slightly between myself as the researcher, and you as study participants.

I. My Goals as the Researcher.

- Establish methods of teaching for aesthetic experience.
- Decide what information that I presented seemed useful, helpful to study participants.
- Determine what pieces of information do not seem useful, helpful in encouraging aesthetic understanding.
- Determine what in the study design seems to be working.
- Determine what mechanical methods do not seem to be working.

II. Goals for study participants.

- Recognize components of aesthetic experience (emotion, perception, cognition, imagination, and discovery).
- Recognize viewing and creating as catalysts for aesthetic experience.
- Recognize evaluation as an important element of an aesthetic curriculum.

- Recognize subjective self in aesthetic response, including aesthetic preferences, objects of disinterest, and objects of dislike.
- Consider where you as a participant can build a bridge between our sessions and classroom practice, studio work, and personal viewing skills.

Study Description: This study examines nine works of art and the context in which they were created. Readings were penned by the artists themselves, by aestheticians, by art historians, or by art critics. Using a double-entry journal format, we will respond to each reading and will reflect on each artwork studied in terms of its personal significance.

The Sessions: The majority of sessions will take place at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in front of the week's object of contemplation. We will meet in a closed conference room at the Massachusetts College of Art if the object of interest in not available locally. In such cases, I will provide each participant with a copy of the reproduction of the work of art. Each meeting will open with an examination of the accompanying position on the Perry Scheme followed by participants reviewing their journal entries. Discussion will begin with each participant articulating a significant journal entry. After each participant has spoken, conversation will progress. As a group, we will decide which topics seem most suitable for further discussion.

After an hour of discussion, we will break for fifteen minutes. This break is necessary for what Perkins calls "reflective intelligence" where not only looking at the object for a long time invites inquiry, but so does looking away and then returning with a fresh eye and new questions.

Upon returning, we will articulate our perceptual, intellectual, imaginative, emotional and discovery responses to the work of art, as we have written in our weekly study sheets. We will also discuss any creative and evaluative comments we may have. If time permits, we will write, in "list" and "free-writing" styles, significant thoughts that were discussed during the session, then we will adjourn.

During session three, using "INSTA-Mold," we will create a plaster hand from our own hand. In session seven, we will create, in the tradition of Navaho sand painting, a sand painting of our own. During session eight, we will converse about the plaster hands that we have since "personalized."

At the last session, we will present and explain the significance of the work of art we created of a precious thing our hand does.

The Journal: Each page of the journal notebook should be divided in half vertically. The left half of the journal page will be used for objective notes gleaned from readings and class discussions (e.g., facts, quotations, summaries of information, etc.). The right half of the journal page will be used for reflecting on these objective entries, for dialoguing (e.g., with your own notes or by sharing the journal with a classmate), and generally for interacting with or reacting to the objective entries. The first five minutes of each session will be reserved for sharing journals with other study participants or for personal reflection on your own entries.

Journal Writing During Sessions: If time permits, we will spend the last fifteen minutes of each session writing in our journals. These entries will include two formats:

List making: Lists, written in the same format as a shopping list, may include descriptors, questions, qualities of visual objects that we favor or dislike, etc.

Freewriting: Freewriting is writing whatever comes to mind without attention to mechanics, spelling, or grammar.

We will write in our journals, using both formats, for about five minutes per format. For the final five minutes of the session, we will read aloud our entries, or share a thought that occurred to us while writing.

Final Paper: Within a week of the final session of the study, I will mail each participant the transcript from the final session. By April 27th, you are asked to submit your three- to five-page paper that reflects on your new level of aesthetic awareness. Please use the journal entries, notes from the readings, weekly study worksheet, reflections from artworks studied, and the art projects made in and out of the sessions as touchstones for this paper. To further assist you with this paper, I will supply you with the following: your personal weekly transcripts that I will have cut and pasted from the complete transcript, a copy of the category chart that includes all the category of responses as I will have identified them, and a "final paper road map," which contains two exercises that should help you identify any changes in your thinking as you progressed through the study. These changes or to use Kegan's term, "contradictions" can be interpreted as the "effect" the study had on you. I will explain these ideas further as we progress in the study.

Study Schedule.

Session One (Mass. Art). Introduction.

Session Two (MFA).

Art Object: Herakles with Club and Lion Skin.
A.D. 120-170 (Middle Roman Imperial, based on 5th century B.C. Greek prototype).
Marble,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Readings: *Classical Mythology in Greek and Roman Art* Department of Education and Public Programs, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1997. 2-3. (supplies perceptual, cognitive, communicative, and creative information)
Plato (c. 432-348 B.C.): "Tenth Book of the Republic." *Philosophies of Art and Beauty.* Ed. Albert Hofsteader and Richard Kuhns. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. 30-45. (supplies philosophical theory of aesthetics)
Meg Black "A Journey Through Time with the Philosophers of Aesthetics." 1996. 1-30. (supplies philosophical theories of Western aesthetics in an historical context)

The article "Classical Mythology in Greek and Roman Art" explores "how myth was utilized by classical artists and what the intersection of myth and art tell us about ancient Greek culture" (2). In the tenth book of the *Republic*, Plato wrestles with the legitimacy of artistic practice; specifically, he argues that art is a mere imitation of absolute, or "tier-one" truth. He defines "art" as only those objects that are a perfect imitation of nature through their use of the exact mathematical proportions found in nature. "A Journey Through Time with the Philosophers of Aesthetics" provides an overview of major philosophical writings on Western aesthetics from Ancient Greece to modern times. In it participants learn that Plato's student Aristotle,

who viewed art as an effective means for teaching moral conduct, defines an "aesthetic" object as one that is "a perfection of form and a sureness of method which guarantees that it will be a satisfactory whole in itself and efficacious in the work" (Hofsteader and Kuhns, 103). Like Plato, for Aristotle, if an object is to be considered art, it must follow natural proportion. In writing their theories on art and aesthetics respectively, Plato and Aristotle have positioned themselves as authorities who define art in a dualistic fashion; to have merit, a work of art must meet the standards they have imposed. In addition, both perceive art as functioning for the purpose of imitating the divine creator's intentions or to teach moral values to the general population.

The ancient Greek artist Polyclitus wrote in his book *The Canon* (Greek for "rule") that "beauty . . arises . . . in the proportion of the parts" (Wilkins, Schultz, Linduff, 98). His marble statue Doryphorus was considered an ideal figure by the Greeks because its proportions adhere to common fractions (exact division of whole numbers, a "harmonious" mathematical system invented by Pythagoras and supported by Plato) of the figure's height. The statue of Herakles with Club and Lion Skin provides a local example of Polyclitus's "canon."

Session Three (Mass. Art).

Art Project: Create a Sculpture of your Hand.

Session Four (MFA).

Art Object: Statuette of a Shepherd Carrying a Sheep
Late Roman, 3rd century A. D.

(probably from Asia Minor),
Marble,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Readings: **John of Damascus**: Excerpts from "Source of Knowledge." *The Columbia History of the World.* Ed. John Garraty and Peter Gay. New York: Harper and Row, 1977. 435-437. (supplies philosophical, theological, and contextual information)
St. Augustine (354-430): Excerpts from "De Ordine." *Philosophies of Art and Beauty.* Ed. Albert Hofsteader and Richard Kuhns. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. 173-184. (supplies philosophical, theological, and contextual information)
Early Christian Art: *Art Past, Art Present.* David Wilkins, Gerard Schultz, Kathryn Linduff. Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990. 146-149. (supplies content and contextual information, and information about the creative process)

The writings in this session centered on the ideal object and its uses in early Christian worship. John of Damascus grounds his argument for the use of religious icons on the Platonic notion of art as being an imitation of divine "truth" and "beauty." He believes that spiritual objects can lead the worshiper to greater truth and ultimately to salvation. Augustine, also inspired by Plato's "tier-one" truths of what constitutes "art" and "beauty," finds icons useful visual aids for furthering man's understanding of the Trinity. Wilkins, Schultz, and Linduff provide an overview of early Christian history, explain the symbolism used by early Christian artists, and conclude with an

explanation of how early Christian artists tried to "express the promises and mysteries of the new faith" (48).

The parable of the Good Shepherd is firmly founded in Christian liturgy (John 10:11, "I am the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep"). With its strict adherence to proportions, this sculpture of the Good Shepherd characterizes what makes an object "art," as defined by Plato and Aristotle. However, this statue also contains the unmistakable characteristics of early Christian art: The Shepherd (symbol of Christ) is fully clothed although his physique is evident, and the sheep on his back symbolizes his care for the flock (Christian followers). As such, this sculpture combines Greek ideals with Christian iconography. This metamorphosis creates a new meaning, one not quite as "authoritative" as the Greek original.

Session Five (MFA).

Art Object: Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain
China, Sung Dynasty (960-1126),
Ink and color on silk,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Readings:

Hsieh Ho (c. 650): "The Six Techniques of Painting." *The Chinese Theory of Art.* Ed. Lin Yutang. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1967. 34- 38. (supplies information about the perceptual, aesthetic [philosophical], and creative process)

Ching Hao (c. 900-967): "A Conversation on Method." *The Chinese Theory of Art.* Ed. Lin Yutang. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1967. 63-68. (supplies criteria for evaluation/criticism)

Chinese Art: "Landscape painting." *Art Past, Art Present.* David Wilkins, Bernard Schultz, Kathryn Linduff. Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990. 170-173. (supplies historical and perceptual information)

Art standards for painting were set down in the mid-fifth century by the painter Hsieh Ho. In a few paragraphs, he defines the six canons that became the cornerstones for all Chinese aesthetics: (1) spirit, consonance, and life movement; (2) structured strength in the use of the brush; (3) fidelity to the object; (4) correct color; (5) proper placement and disposition; and (6) transmission of ancient masters by copying with the examples set by sixth century Tang dynasty artists (paraphrased from Wilkins et al, 172).

Three centuries later, Ching Hao, who lived during the Sung dynasty, penned an essay in which he listed his criteria for judging paintings. Under the classification of "divine," he grouped the "greatest" paintings. Artists whose work could be considered divine were imbued with *ch'i,* the divine spirit of the universe. *Ch'i* could only be achieved through years of self-cultivation. Monumentality, verticality, and Man's inferiority to Nature make the painting Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain characteristic of the Sung dynasty. Symmetrically monumental configurations of mountains and water in the tenth century came to be associated with the imperial government, which considered itself to be grand, ordered, realistic, and powerful (paraphrased from Yutang 65).

Wilkins et al. explain that to the Chinese, a picture was a mysterious thing, containing the essence of the world of Nature. Naturalism in Chinese art sought truth in natural appearances and closely examined how Nature operated. Thus, Chinese paintings

often depict exposed tree trunks, bent and gnarled branches, and dormant tree buds.

Whereas man was the primary subject in Greek and early Christian art, Nature was the primary subject in Chinese art, with man's role clearly subordinate to Nature's awesome and brutal strength. The diversity of opinion as to what was important to portray and what was the appropriate method for portrayal in Chinese art contradicts the canons of Greek and early Christian art.

Session Six (MFA).

Art Object: Mask (Deangle)
Ivory Coast, Dan People,
20th century
Wood, vegetable fiber, and shell,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Readings: **Tom Philips:** "Introduction." *AFRICA: The Art of a Continent.* Ed. Tom Phillips. New York: Prestel, 1997. 11-20. (supplies content, context, historical, and philosophical information)
Kwame Anthony Appiah: "Why Africa? Why Art?" *AFRICA: The Art of a Continent.* Ed. Tom Phillips. New York: Prestel, 1997. pp. 21-26. (supplies an example of art criticism)
Jacques Kerchache. "The Dan.": *Art of Africa.* New York: Harry Abrams, 1997. 521-522. (supplies information about perception, history, content, context, and the creative process)

The African Dan and the Native American Navajos are concerned with neither the permanence of an object nor with imitating the laws of nature, but rather with the spirituality that an object possesses. For these cultures, the object does not simply *symbolize* the spiritual (as it does in Ancient Chinese and early Christian art), rather the object *contains* the spirit when it is in use for ceremonial functions. This notion raises several questions: Can an object be considered "art"

If it is not created to be permanent? if its function is other than decorative or symbolic? If it is used in conjunction with other cultural practices? Finally, by asking these questions, do we communicate a Western bias of what art should be?

Tom Philips provides an overview of the history of African art as it pertains to the continent rather than to individual regions. Art critic Kwame Anthony Appiah provides a personal story of the African art objects that adorned his childhood home growing up in Kumasi, Ghana.

The Dan people live in the northwest Ivory Coast of Africa. Movement and dance are an important part of their culture. The *Go* society is a political body of male Dan whose primary ritual function is to conduct public rites that ensure the ordered passage of the dead into the supernatural world. These public rites include dancers whose elaborate wooden masks completely disguise the dancers' true identities. The entire process of mask creation involves ritual, sacrifices, and sanction. For example, because all trees contain spirits, and a spirit is released when a tree is cut down to make a mask, precautions are taken and a container for this supernatural spirit is provided. The masks themselves are sacred only when worn by the dancers and are frequently allowed to rot after the ceremonies have concluded (paraphrased from Kerchache 521-522).

Session Seven (Mass. Art).

Art Object: Father Sun, Mother Earth
Navajo sandpainting.
Contemporary.

Colored sand.

Readings: **Douglas Congdon-Martin:** *The Navajo Art of Sandpainting.* Atglen, PA.: Schiffer, 1997. 3-6. (supplies historical, perceptual, and evaluative information along with an explanation of the creative process)

The issue of permanence and the art object continues with our study of Navaho sandpainting. The aesthetics of beauty via the canons of the body or as an imitation of nature do not pertain to the Navahos who used the paintings only as part of their ritual ceremonies. The power of the sandpaintings was intact only so long as the medicine man was present.

Traditionally, sandpaintings were part of the "chant" or "sing" of the patient over which the medicine man presided as part of the diagnosis. Navaho legend says that the figures depicted in the sandpaintings were first drawn on the clouds by the War Eagle God. He taught the Navaho to make the figures with colored ground sand or sand from the painted desert. The War Eagle God knew that sandpaintings could not be stolen by an enemy because they could not be removed from their original location. He cautioned that the paintings must be started at dawn and destroyed by sundown lest evil spirits use them (paraphrased from Congdon-Martin).

Session Eight (Mass. Art).

Art project: Personalize the plaster hand so that it "says" something about you.

Session Nine (Mass. Art).

Art Object: The Last Supper
Leonardo Da Vinci, 1498.
Tempra, oil, varnish on frecso,
S. Maria della Grazie, Milan.

Readings: **Ludwig Heydenreich.** "Goethe and Leonardo's Last Supper." *Leonardo: The Last Supper.* New York: Viking Press, 1974. 85-90. (example of art criticism)
Ludwig Heydenreich. "Condition and Restoration." *Leonardo: The Last Supper.* New York: Viking Press, 1974. 91-97. (explains restoration effort, creative process used by Da Vinci)
Ken Shulman. "Worth the Wait." *Art News* Mar. (1995): 112-113. (explains art restoration technique)
"Leonardo Da Vinci and the United, High Renaissance Composition." Art Past, Art Present. David Wilkins, Bernard Schultz, Kathryn Linduff. Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990. 254-257. (supplies historical, content, context, perceptual, philosophical/aesthetic information)

Goethe provides a classic example of art criticism as he describes, interprets, analyzes and evaluates the Last Supper, focusing largely on perceptual and historical information. Heydenreich details the history of the restoration effort. Shulman describes the latest restoration effort and includes scholarly analysis on the state of the painting as the restoration effort nears completion.

Leonardo Da Vinci believed that the artist possessed a privileged and necessary position in society. He considered keen observation of nature fundamental to knowledge and its implementations in art a decisive move toward an ideal vision. Further, according to Wilkins et al., he believed that "painted figures ought to be done in such a way that those who see them will be able to easily recognize from their attitudes the thoughts of their minds" (256).

Attempts to preserve Da Vinci's Last Supper demonstrate many things, among them the Western obsession with the past and the individuals who personified those time periods. However, because of the damage to the painting caused by humidity and incompatible art materials, scholars and art restoration experts believe that it is not possible to retrieve the badly decomposed surface. As Italian art restoration expert Pinin Brambilla Barcilon states, "I do think that Leonardo would be very disappointed if he saw his painting today because it isn't the painting that he created. He would find himself before a work that has been trampled by the passage of time, and by the passage of man. . . . I don't know whether he would want to conserve this work or not" (Shulman 113).

Session Ten (MFA).

Art Object: The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris
Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) and Studio.
c. 1622-1623.
Oil on canvas.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Readings:

J. W. Goethe (1798). "Part VI." *Geothe's Theory of Colours.* Trans. Charles Lock Eastlake. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1989. 304-335. (supplies philosophical, aesthetic, and political theory)

Deane B. Judd (1989). "Introduction." *Geothe's Theory of Colours.* Trans. Charles Lock Eastlake. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1989. viii-xvi. (supplies contextual information)

Emmanual Kant (1790). "The Concept of the Beautiful (Third Moment)" from Critique of Judgment. *Philosophies of Art and Beauty.* Ed. Albert Hofsteader and Richard Kuhns. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. 293- 301. (supplies philosophical/aesthetic theory)

Marjorie E. Wiesman. "no. 24." *The Age of Rubens.* Ed. Peter Sutton. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1993. 281-284. (supplies perceptual and historical analysis)

Henry M. Sayre. "The Formal Elements and their Design." *Worlds of Art.* Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994. 103-104.

Plato believes that nature, being only one step removed from the divine creator's intention for the ideal truth, is an appropriate subject for the aesthetic experience. Art, as an imitation of nature, is too far removed from the creator's intentions and therefore inappropriate as the source for an aesthetic experience.

In the writings of Goethe and Kant, we begin to see a shift in thought from viewing art as an untrustworthy subject for an aesthetic experience to viewing art as a trusted source for the aesthetic experience, but only when the object imitates nature. Goethe praises "the Flemish master, Rubens" (Eastlake 334) for his masterful use of color. Kant believes that the ability to judge an object's aesthetic significance is a sign of transcendental wisdom as well as an understanding of Christian morals (paraphrased from Hofsteader and Kuhns).

Judd provides personal insight into the life, times, and theory of Goethe and his contemporaries, including Kant and Hegal, both of whom were discussed in the second session. Hegel breaks with the tradition of considering art a flawed subject for an aesthetic experience. He believes that art, when representing the natural wonders of God's universe, is the perfect vehicle for representing the "Ideal" (i.e., Christian truth).

Goethe contends that colors have moral and religious significance, existing halfway between the goodness of pure light and the damnation of pure blackness. Goethe further believes that "in heaven there is only of pure light, but the fact that we can

experience color,--which, according to the laws of optics, depends upon light mixing with darkness--promises us at least the hope of salvation" (Sayre 103-104).

Wiesman provides an example of perceptual and historical analysis of the painting, including content and contextual information, information on who commissioned the painting, and the painting's history in various museum collections. Her essay leads the viewer around the compositional whole, examining every detail and clearly explaining symbolic imagery.

Peter Paul Rubens' painting of The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris was created during the height of European opera's popularity. Rubens attempted to capture the drama that characterized opera by crowding his paintings with human figures, coagulated colors, and atmospheric perspective. The Head of Cyrus brought to Queen Tomyris, like other Rubens' paintings, appears to be a still photograph of an opera scene.

According to Wiesman, Rubens used the painting as a "reminder of the power and virtue of the reigning monarch, a symbol of heroic strength and just retribution" (283).

Session Eleven (Mass. Art).

Art Object: Guernica
Pablo Picasso, 1937.
Oil on canvas.
Centro de Arts Reina Sof'ia, Madrid.

Readings: **George L. Steer.** "The Tragedy of Guernica" *Picasso's Guernica.* Ed. Ellen Oppler. New York: W. W. Norton. 1988. 160- 164. (supplies historical, political information)

Rudolf Arnheim. "The Genesis of a Painting." *Picasso's Guernica.* Ed. Ellen Oppler. New York: W. W. Norton, 1988. 286- 289. (supplies theory of creativity, perceptual information)
Meg Black. Section on Benedetto Croce, from "A Journey through time with the Philosophers of Aesthetics." (supplies aesthetic theory.)

Steer explains that In 1937, Picasso was asked by the Spanish government in exile to create a mural for its pavilion at the World's Fair in Paris. The result was Guernica, a work named after a Basque town in northern Spain that had been bombed by the Nazis earlier that year. Rudolf Arnheim details the creative process of the artist and provides photographic examples of the mural in its different stages of development. While considered by many to be Picasso's best known masterpiece, "it is a problematic work, stylistically complex, with images difficult to decipher, whose meaning is unclear" (Oppler 45). According to Wilkins et al., Picasso "refused to elaborate on the particular intentions he invested in each figure, instead preferring to encourage the viewer to understand the work on an emotional and intuitive level" (486).

Croce believes that visual "expression" resulting from "intuition" was the most important element in a work of art. He strongly believes that the artist should decide what to create and how to create it, and that, by doing so, the final results will be much stronger than would be possible for a dictated subject deemed "appropriate" by a connoisseur or philosopher.

Session Twelve (Mass. Art).

Art Object: The French Collection Part I: # 1
Faith Ringgold, 1991.

Acrylic on canvas; pieced fabric border.
Artist's collection.

Readings:

Linda Nochlin: "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *Art News*, 69, 9 (1971): 22-39, 67-70. (supplies philosophical, critical and political theory, and historical information)

Faith Ringgold: "We Flew Over the Bridge: Performance Art, Story quilts, and Tar Beach." *We Flew Over the Bridge.* New York: Bulfinch, 1995. 237-272. (supplies personal and contextual information and explores Ringgold's theory of creativity, and the creative act)

Linda Nochlin's famous essay asks us to reflect on the role women artists have played in Western art history. Faith Ringgold's story quilts, which combine visual images with written text, bring to life her experiences of growing up as an African-American female in mid-twentieth century Harlem. Both the visual images and texts depict and/or are narrated by women, and are often inspired by the women members of Ringgold's family. In *We Flew Over the Bridge,* Ringgold explains that "I sat quietly, . . . listening intently to the often tragic details of the lives of family members and friends told in that way that black women had in my childhood of expressing themselves"
(257).

The French Collection Part 1: #1 was inspired by a trip to France that Ringgold took with her mother and two daughters in 1961. The very idea of black women traveling to the "cultured" city of Paris to visit the Louvre was unheard of at this time. Ringgold pokes fun at the racist attitudes of contemporary whites and their

perception that black people would not know how to behave in such a cultural setting, let alone belong in one.

Ringgold's use of simplistic composition, the quilting medium traditionally associated with women, the inclusion of her personal history (in this case, an extensive study of the famous "masterpieces" when she was an art student), and the addition of text to the surface of the work depart from the traditional conceptions of what makes an object "art." In the process, Ringgold creates her own meaning.

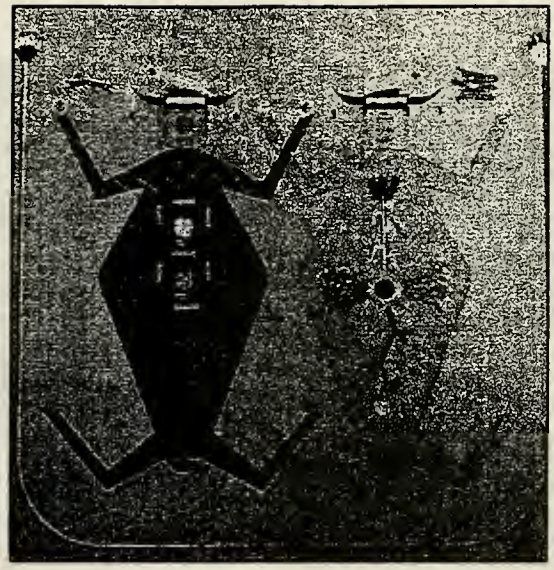
Session Thirteen (Mass. Art).

Art project: Make a work of art of the most precious thing/s your hand does.

Session Two
Herakles with Club and Lion Skin
A. D. 120-170 (Middle Roman Imperial).
based on 5th century B.C. Greek prototype.
Marble,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Session Four
Statuette of a Shepherd Carrying a Sheep
Late Roman, 3rd century A. D.
(probably from Asia Minor).
Marble,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Session Five
Drinking and Singing at the Foot of
a Precipitous Mountain
China, Sung Dynasty (960-1126).
Ink and color on silk,
Museum of Fine arts, Boston.

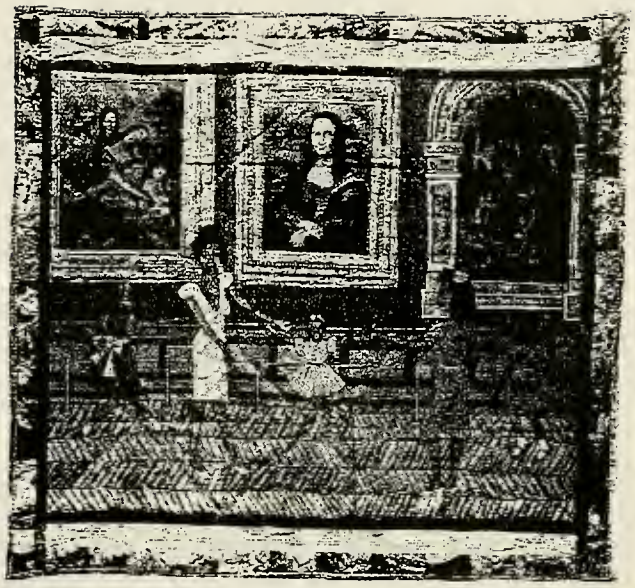


Session Seven
Father Sky and Mother Earth
Contemporary.
Navajo Sandpainting,
Colored sand.

Session Six
Mask (Deangle)
Ivory Coast, Dan People,
20th century.
Wood, vegetable fiber, and shell,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Session Nine
Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519).
Last Supper, 1498.
Tempra, oil, varnish on fresco,
S. Maria della Grazi, Milan.

Session Ten
Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) and Studio.
The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris
c. 1622-1623.
Oil on canvas,
Museum of fine Arts, Boston.



Session Twelve
Faith Ringgold (1930-).
The French Collection Part 1: # 1, 1991.
Acrylic on canvas; pieced fabric border,
Artist's collection

Session Eleven
Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).
Guernica, 1937.
Oil on canvas,
Centro de Arts Reina Sof'ia, Madrid.

Appendix B: Pre-study Interview Protocol

PART ONE

1A. Please describe in explicit detail a significant aesthetic experience that you have had with an original work of art.
Probes:
1B. How did you find the work of art?
1C. Had you studied the work before viewing the original?
1D. Relive the first minute or two of viewing the work. What were you thinking about the work during these first moments? What did you do (stand still, walk around it, sit down, etc.)?
1E. Did you have any questions about or for the work?
1F. What was it about the work that made you stop and look?
1G. Was there anything about the artwork that you didn't like?
1H. Was there anything you didn't understand about the artwork? (If "yes" to either "didn't like" or "didn't understand," ask interviewee "did this affect your experience with object in any way?")

The components of aesthetic experience:

1I. Can you describe any emotions you might have felt about the work of art?
1J. Can you describe any perceptual qualities (composition, color usage, stylistic or philosophic school of art that the work is a member of and how it can be classified as such)?
1K. Can you tell me anything about the history of the work or about the artist who produced it? What role did this object play in the culture that produced it?
1L. What, if anything, did you imagine about the work? For example, any change in scale? How the artist created it, or what he/she was thinking when he/she created it? Did you pretend to actually be inside the work? If so, what did you do while you were pretending to exist within it?
1M. Did you make any discoveries about the work while you viewed it? Did you discover anything about yourself?

Note: These questions might create mini-development within the interview as they could suggest ideas not previously considered by

the interviewee.

PART TWO

Ask same questions as in part one.
Probes:
2A. Do you see anything in common between the two artworks that you've named as having an experience with? In other words, do they have any similar characteristics that encouraged your positive response?
2B. What, if anything, don't the objects have in common?

PART THREE

After this discussion, I will ask the interviewee to describe a particular work, style, or school of art that they do not like.
3A. What reason(s) don't you like this particular artwork (or these particular artworks?)
3B. What characteristics do the works of art you named in part one have that this (or these) work(s) don't have?

PART FOUR
4A. Have you ever attempted to teach about artworks (that you do like, that you don't like) in your curriculum?
4B. Do you think that your overall preferences inform what you are comfortable teaching?
4C. Do you leave out from your curriculum artworks that you are uncomfortable with ?
4D. Do you think that you favor in your curriculum artworks that you are more comfortable with?
4F. Do you believe that your perception for what defines an artwork matches that of members of your school or local community?
4G. Conversely, does your perception of what artworks are difficult to look at match that of members of your school or local community?

Appendix C: Solicitation Letter for Research Participants

GET PAID TO EARN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POINTS!!!

My name is Meg Black, and I am an art educator who will soon be entering the dissertation phase of my Ph.D. studies at Lesley College. The topic of my dissertation is women art educators and the aesthetic experience.

For my research study, I am looking for women art educators to participate in a 10-to 12-week workshop that focuses on aesthetic conversation. The study will begin in mid-January of 1998. Two of the classes will be held at a Boston studio where we will make visual objects and/or discuss our written assignments. The other nine classes will be held at area art museums (M.F.A., Peabody Museum and the Museum of African American Art). Each workshop participant will receive between 100.00 and 150.00 dollars as well as the chance to earn professional development points.

Participants will be asked to read selected works before each class, keep a journal, and write a brief paper (3 to 5 pages) at the end of the workshop to present to the group. The museum classes will meet on a weekday during the late afternoon or early evening for two hours. The studio classes will meet on a Saturday for approximately four hours each. I will interview each participant in your classroom at your convenience for approximately one hour at the beginning and end of the study.

If you are interested, please mail back the enclosed card with all information included, and I will contact you immediately.

Thank you for your attention, and I hope to have you as a participant in this important study.

Meg Black
Please call me at 508-887-8670 if you have any questions.

Appendix D: Study Contract

January 20, 1998.

Welcome to the study!

Before we meet on Wednesday, January 28th, I would like to make clear the purpose of the study. While I hope that you feel comfortable with this purpose, if you do not, this declaration offers you the opportunity to withdraw from the group before our first meeting, and I will eliminate your interview transcript from the record.

This study asks the question, "What effect, if any, does conversation have on the aesthetic understanding of women art educators?" To be sure, this question suggests two ideas or "theories:" (1), that conversation might inform our current perspective of aesthetic understanding, but we don't know how and, 2), that the word "effect" suggests an improvement of sorts to our current aesthetic perspective.

A word about theories

A "theory" is an idea that someone came up with. Few, if any, are empirical, that is, they cannot be "proven." A Ph.D. in education requires that the candidate know the theories that are pertinent to his/her field of inquiry, with the assumption that at least a few of these theories will inform the dissertation study.

Both developmental and non-developmental theories have informed this dissertation study. The developmental theories that have informed this study are: William Perry's theory of cognitive and ethical development; Michael Parsons' and Abigail Housen's theory of aesthetic development; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Rick Robinson's theory of what constitutes an "expert" aesthetic response, and Melora McDermott-Lewis' research of "novice" and "advanced amateur" museum visitor expectations. The non-developmental theories that have informed this study are Belenky et. al.'s theory of "Women's Ways of Knowing," Kathleen Taylor's and Catherine Maienau's theory of what constitutes a supportive learning environment for women, and David Perkins theory of how looking at art develops critical thinking skills.

Developmental theories suggest that our responses exemplify our current developmental level of understanding. Typically, the persons who elicit the highest degree of "rational thought" based on knowledge of volumes of written information pertinent to the topic at hand are considered the most "developed." In the field of aesthetics, art historians or professional aestheticians are amongst the people who often respond to a visual object at such a developed level.

Recently, the idea that any theory can be deemed "developmental" has been questioned by feminist scholars who cite prejudice and academic bias for what constitutes the most developed stages. Is it fair, for example, to purport "rational thought" as the most developed level of understanding when so many

women report being more comfortable with "emotional thought," which is, in most developmental theories considered a more relative level of understanding? Emotional thought is, for me, particularly interesting in the field of aesthetics, where women tend to emphasize their emotional response to the visual object as the most significant for them.

This study proposes to do two things: (1), examine, in a supportive environment, any aesthetic responses that you as study participants acknowledge as being particularly significant, and, (2), attempt to expand on these responses in an effort to make the experience more enriching. I believe any understanding that can be gained from this study is particularly important in the field of art education, a field that is dominated by women.

A word about the study

In this study, we will examine a select number of art objects, read pertinent information about them, and converse about our response to both the objects and the reading materials. This is a subjective, participant observation study, meaning that I am not only researching the study, I am participating in it as well. Data collection will include (1) recording and transcribing all conversations, (2) writing observational notes from each session, (3) analyzing journal entries, and (4) analyzing final papers.

If you feel that you would like to contribute to this study, and in the process, (hopefully) deepen your aesthetic understanding, then I look forward to seeing you at our first session on Wednesday, January 28th. Please bring this singed consent form with you to this meeting. If you are not present at this meeting, and I have not heard from you by this date, I will assume that your interest in the study has diminished, and you will not be joining us.

Thank you and I look forward to beginning our journey.

Meg Black
978-887-8670

Informed Consent:
To ensure your right to privacy, the following policy will be enacted as part of the study:

1. All personal information (age, school district employed through, years teaching etc.), will be "approximate" to ensure privacy.

1. You will be identified, when writing the dissertation and when addressing anyone outside of the study group, using a fictitious name. No one, not even members of the dissertation committee, will have knowledge of your identity unless you share this information with that person.

2. Until this dissertation is complete, no one will be allowed to read it with the exception of the dissertation committee members, and the professional editor.

3. I will supply you with a copy of the previous week's session transcript during the following session. Anything you want deleted from these transcripts will be honored immediately. The same applies to the pre-study and post-study interview transcripts.

4. You are free to read any of the theories that have informed this study at any time during the study.

5. You are free to withdraw from participation in the study at any time, or may refuse to respond to any part of the study. Participants who desire to withdraw shall be allowed to do so promptly and without prejudice to their interests.

I, the undersigned have read all of the above and agree to the terms of this study.

Signed,

Date:

Appendix E: Artwork Created by Participants

Session Three: Example of a plaster hand before being personalized.

Session Seven: Reproduction of the sandpainting Father Sky and Mother Earth, created by participants in the style of Navajo sandpainting.

Session Eight: The Personalized Hands.

Sally

Plaster, threads, beads

"This piece represents how closely interwoven all the important elements of my life are . . . My own studio work, my teaching, my family, and friends. I think this correlates well with how interwoven my aesthetic flux is with my own studio work and practice and teaching."

Molly

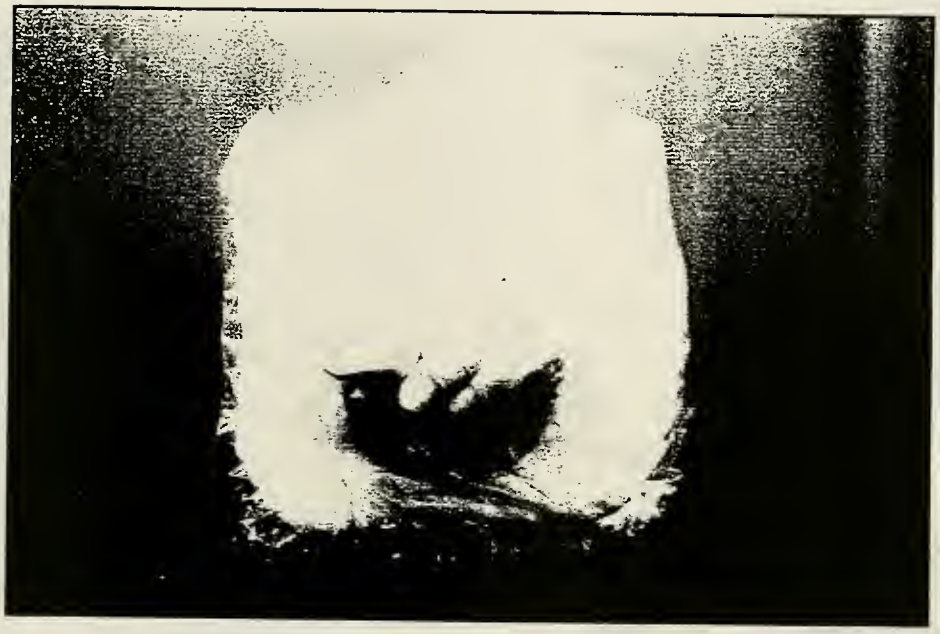
Plaster, ebony pencil

"I asked myself, 'What pose can I make?'
What would reflect something about me?
I'm always holding a soft pencil and
sketching. And I like sculpture too.
So, this is about the part of me that likes to
sketch and do or look at sculpture."

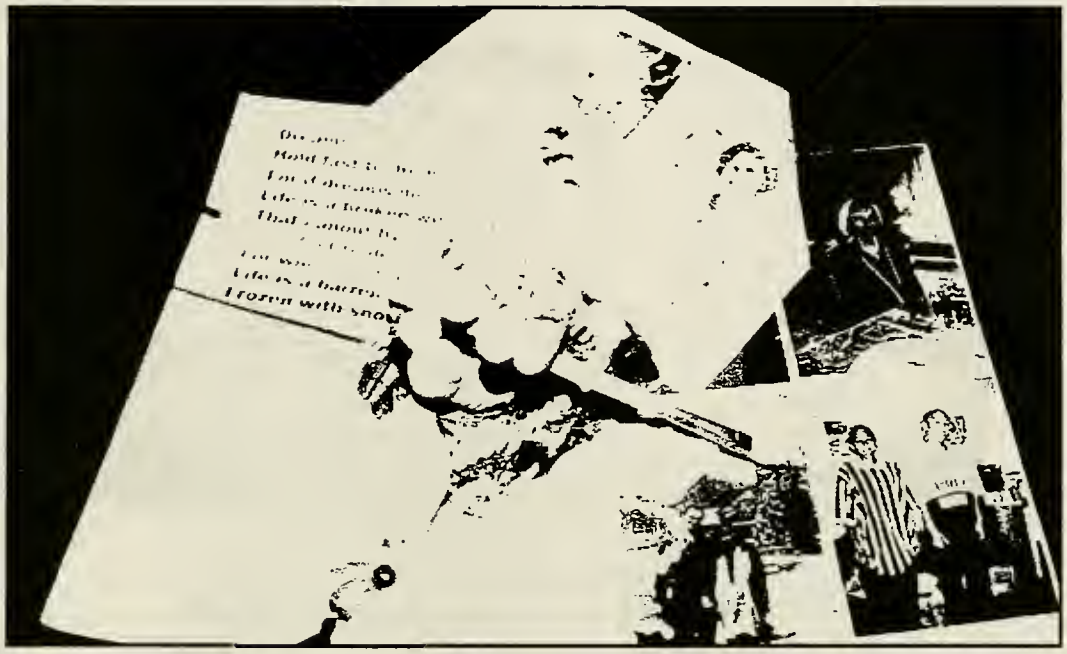
Yvette

Plaster, chicken wire, cardboard box, plastic wrap

"I cushioned it, and put it in a box to be protected, secured with chicken wire and string. And I put a broken heart in the palm--the pink matches the pink on the sides . . . 'It means stay away.' . . . The wire is helping me hold it together. The string means you can always make it work."



Isabel
Plaster, plastic wrap
" It is protected. The plastic is symbolic of protecting my hands, because I have allergies. The "L" shape is sign language for the letter L. It is symbolic of laughter, love, learning--something I apply to my teaching and to my life."



Jane
Plaster, mixed media
"I love the ocean, so I painted my hand blue,
as if it were rising out of the ocean. And I added
the sea shell . Doing that reminded me of the book
Gifts from the Sea by Anne Lindberg. And
I put the paint brush in my hand, symbolic of
my life as a watercolorist. I love poems, so I placed it
on one of my favorite poems. And, I xeroxed
pictures of my mother with me when I was a child,
and, pictures of my children who are a part of me."

Abigail
Plaster hand, fake fur
"My hand is from my Fay Wray period. The fur is coming out of the fingers, in a strange place. Fay Wray was the quintessential dumb blond. She couldn't take care of herself. And King Kong is the big powerful masculine force. It's sort of like, knowing that you have power, you're smart, you can do things, but being thought of as Fay Wray. So, instead of doing one or the other, they were both my alter-egos."

Artwork brought in for Session Thirteen

Sally
Glazed stoneware

"This . . . sculpture . . . is symbolic of a lot of different things. I found myself at the end of last year with a really difficult class. There was a lot of tension in the room . . . so I came up with a lesson . . . I had them make a chalice that would honor somebody. . . . I started working on my chalice . . . that held a candle. . . . I wanted them to think of the hand as holding a candle that would represent them making the world a better place, with what they had given in art, to carry on with that."

Molly
Wire, plaster of Paris
"I like working with a lot of everyday objects. Trying to look for the practical things in everyday life that we use . . . [it's] just an ordinary piece of wood . . . A coat hanger . . . that's the wire underneath. And . . . some plaster of Paris. . . . I got into it and I started thinking of emotions . . . and . . . my . . . intuition. . . . To depict an emotion or a feeling. And . . . it just sort of emerged."

Yvette
Watercolor, graphite
"This is about East meets West. And I was holding the brush, and I was thinking about the conversation about the rules [during session five]. . . . And . . . making things look a certain way."

Isabel
Oil on canvas

"Mine is called The day After. . . . This is what's happening after, and now this person here, this is a male, and this person is not sitting pensive. This is a female that he's carrying. So, he's carrying Nature. So, he's carrying the weight of Nature but you can't see the female because obviously the body isn't there, it's not meant to be. And you can see that it's coming forward because this is a vision, so it's sort of like a tunnel vision. So you're looking at it, and this is what you're perceiving, and this is what's coming up first."

Jane
Watercolor
"It's a watercolor. It's the marsh tides at Wellfleet. And I just got to stay in this wonderful house for a short time, and there are incredible marsh tides in Wellfleet. And the landscape changes constantly. . . . You know, my love for planet earth, and the land, and the landscape, and the constantly changing clouds, and earth. It [is] successful to me in that it spoke of [John Singer] Sargent and looking for the light."

Abigail
Mixed media
"This is another example from my
Fay Wray period."

Appendix F: Weekly Study Worksheet

This study asks the question, "What effect, if any, does conversation have on the aesthetic understanding of six women art educators?"

To help me obtain answers to this question, I need to collect data in the following aesthetic components: perception, intellect, imagination, emotion, and discovery. Your creative and evaluative comments are also important as they reflect on the elements of an aesthetic curriculum.

After completing the assigned reading (and before our scheduled session) write in the space below your answer to the following questions. List write if you wish, as thoughts are more important than sentences.

What effect, if any, did the readings for this week have on your:

(1) perceptual response to the artwork (formal or surface qualities, palette, scale, composition)?

(2) cognitive response to the artwork (art historical, historical, sociological, philosophical, commission and collecting history)?

(3) imaginative response to the artwork (did the artwork remind you of any personal situations you have experienced, did you pretend to exist within the artwork, or otherwise recompose the artwork other than how the artist has done)?

(4) emotion-based response (what feelings did the artwork release in you, what exists in this artwork that might have reminded you of this emotional reverie)?

(5) what did you discover about the artwork from reading this material, or from looking at the reproduction?

(5b) what did you discover about yourself from the readings, or from viewing the reproduction?

(6) creative response to the artwork (as an artist, think about your own creative skills, pursuits, habits)?

(7) What was your evaluation of the artwork (please respond to the following: (a) level of artistic ability demonstrated by the artist, (b) level of insight you gained from reading about/viewing this artwork, (c) would you want to view this artwork again, and if so, do you think you would discover something new about it)?

(7a) level of artistic ability demonstrated by the artist?

(7b) level of insight you gained from reading about/viewing this artwork?

(7c) would you want to view this artwork again, and if so, do you think you would discover something new about it?

Appendix G: Category Chart

1.	Black pen	Imagination
2.	Green pen	Experience with original or reproduction.
3.	Red pen	Discovery
4.	Pencil	Evaluation
5.	Pink.	Emotional response.
6.	Orange.	Intellectual response.
7.	Yellow.	Perceptual response.
8.	Blue.	Communication response.
9.	Aqua pen.	Creative response/studio work/studio practice/studio discipline.
10.	Purple.	Comments about teaching.
11.	Blue-violet.	One member questions or contradicts another member's thinking.
12.	Lavender.	General feedback about the sessions/study.
13.	Gold.	Efforts at juxtaposing.
14.	Ochre.	Critique of Western art/culture.
15.	Slate.	Critique of non-Western art/culture.
16.	Cool grey.	Support for Western art/culture.
17.	Copper.	Support for non-Western art/culture.
18.	Indigo	Human Rights/women's rights issues.

Appendix H: Final Paper Road Map

Final Paper Road Map

This study sought to inform and deepen your aesthetic understanding. The following exercises should help you discover any changes in your aesthetic thinking as you progressed through the study. Hopefully, this will make writing your final paper a little easier. I have put the road map on a floppy disk, so all you have to do is fill in the answers. Please return the floppy disk so that I have a record of the road map as well as the final papers (place the final paper on the same disk, if possible, thanks!).

Step 1. Carefully read your pre-study interview transcript at least once.

Step 2. During the second reading, color code all categories (i.e., highlight in pink all of your emotional responses, highlight in orange all of your intellectual responses etc.) according to my category chart. If you use a different coding system, please explain it to me or I won't know how to read your data. Note: You probably won't find all 18 categories in any of your personal transcripts, as these categories represent all the categories of response.

Step 3. Carefully read your individual transcripts for each week. Refer to the group transcript if you have any questions about the context in which you spoke.

Step 4. Color code each week's individual transcripts using the same color codes you used for the pre-study interview transcript.

Step 5. Starting with your pre-study interview transcript, carefully read each individual transcript in order, and by individual category (i.e., read your emotional responses in your interview transcript first, followed by your emotional responses in your individual transcript from session 1, followed by your emotional responses in your individual transcript from session 2. Read only your emotional responses in order, before moving on to another category). Record on exercise sheet 1 any changes you notice about the way you respond in each category that you've identified. Changes might

include a departure from the way you spoke about this topic during the pre-study interview, or a stronger support for this idea. If you notice no change at all write "no change."

Step 6. Starting with your pre-study interview transcript, carefully read the next individual transcript (i.e., read all of the interview transcript, followed by all of session one [Stop, and answer the questions on exercise sheet 2. Next, read all of session 1 followed by all of session 2. Stop, and answer the questions on exercise sheet 2. Continue until all the sessions have been covered]). What do you notice as a confirming idea from the previous session (or transcript)? What do you notice as a contradicting idea from the previous session (or transcript)? How does this create continuity of your aesthetic understanding?

Summarize, at the end of exercise sheet 2 how for you the combination of confirmation + contradiction = continuity. Any continuity that you find can be thought of as the effect the study had on your aesthetic understanding. In some cases, you may find no change, or a firmer opinion about an idea you expressed in the pre-study interview. This information is also important to discuss in your paper, especially if you feel that participating in this study contributed in any way to this confirmation.

Please return the color-coded individual transcripts and the floppy disk along with the 3 to 5 page paper in the S.A.S.E.

I need your papers by Monday, April 27th. Please make sure they are mailed by Saturday, April 25th. I will mail your check upon receiving your final paper and color-coded worksheets!

Exercise Sheet 1.

Category 1 (imagination)

Pre-study interview transcript. (Example. I imagined the artwork to be larger, filling the whole room, then I could walk inside of it).

Session 1 (Example. No change).

Session 2 (Example. This session I thought about what it would have been like to talk to the artist, find out why he carved the figure the way he did. And, what would it have been like to be an artist back then, what rules did they have to follow?)

Session 3 (continue, as in the example above, with each session, determining any changes. Do this for all of the categories).

Session 4 (Note: Place more distance between sessions if you need more room to write).

Session 5

Session 6

Session 7

Session 8

Session 9

Session 10

Session 11

Session 12

Session 13

(Continue with this format for all the categories you can find in your personal transcripts).

Exercise Sheet 2.

Pre-study interview transcript.
Confirmation + Contradiction = Continuity won't apply because it's the first entry.

Entry 1.
Confirmation from pre-study interview transcript to session 1 (what, if any, of your thoughts or ideas appear to be the same?):

Contradiction from pre-study interview transcript to session 1 (what, if any, of your thoughts or ideas appear to be different?):

Continuity between pre-study interview transcript and session 1 (how does the combination of Confirmation [of your thoughts or ideas] + Contradiction [of your thoughts or ideas] = Continuity [i.e. a deeper understanding of the aesthetic experience?]).

Entry 2.
Confirmation from session 1 to session 2 (what ideas appear to be the same?):

Contradiction from session 1 to session 2 (what ideas appear to be different?):

Continuity between session 1 and session 2. (how does the combination of Confirmation + Contradiction = Continuity?)

Entry 3.
Confirmation from session 2 to session 3

Contradiction from session 2 to session 3.

Continuity between session 2 and session 3 (how does the combination of Confirmation + Contradiction = Continuity?)

(Continue with this format for all weeks, use more space between entries if you need to).

Summarize: How did the combination of confirmation + contradiction = continuity.

The findings from the exercises above should help you trace your own deepened aesthetic understanding. For the final paper, you may want to focus on the most significant category or topic that stayed the same, and the most significant topic that changed and explain how these ends of the continuum created a deeper aesthetic understanding.

Remember though, this is your paper, and what you decide to write about becomes the effect the study had on you. I will accept your words to represent your thinking. Along with these exercises, re-read your study worksheets, journal notes, and any other materials that might assist you. Good luck and contact me if you need assistance or if you have any questions.

Appendix I: Protocol for Post-study Interview (February, 1999)

What effect, if any, did the study have on you as a:

Viewer?

Teacher?

Artist?

In general?

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